

THE NATION

APRIL 25, 1959 . . 25c

STRONTIUM-90 IN U.S. CHILDREN

The Report That the AEC Is Withholding

by Walter Schneir

Upsala College
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East Orange, N. J.



Spring Books

LEGEND and MYTH in 'DR. ZHIVAGO'

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LETTERS

For World Security

Dear Sirs: If Geoffrey Barraclough's article in your April 4 issue, "NATO: Appraisal and Forecast," could be made required reading by political leaders East and West, sense might emerge in the prospective conferences on the Berlin situation—or rather the European and world situation.

In rough summary, Professor Barraclough's views are that NATO probably served a useful purpose when it was founded ten years ago, but that it has now become irrelevant as a defense system. He concludes: "nothing short of a world-security organization can meet the needs of the nuclear age." Fine. But the writer does not even outline the general form of his conceived world organization, nor does he indicate the course of negotiation for its attainment. . . . To me and perhaps to most non-emotional realists who are concerned with world decency, the answer seems quite obvious and fundamentally simple: That world security requires administrable organization to prevent war; that this can be established only through comprehensive international agreement for total disarmament (including conventional as well as nuclear, down to local police needs); that the agreement must be rigorously enforced by the reconstituted United Nations through its own-recruited inspection and police forces.

Now, why not propose this over-all peace plan at the forthcoming East-West conferences? Is there not now considerable possibility that Mr. Khrushchev would agree? If not, what would we lose by having made the proposal? At least, would we not have gained greatly in world prestige and influence?

JOHN BAUER

Chatham, N. J.

He Wants Conflict

Dear Sirs: I was surprised to see your editorial entitled "The 'Silent' Faculty" [April 4] concerning the University of Texas and its president, Logan Wilson. I have known Logan Wilson for many years. If he said that conflicts must be kept to a minimum, as charged by *The Daily Texan*, your readers may be assured that he meant personal and departmental conflicts, not intellectual ones. As a matter of fact, the last time I saw him he told me he wished there could be a few more conflicts, a few more non-conformists on his faculty, and

a little more excitement in some of the departments at his university. I know few if any university presidents who are more dedicated than he to the principle and practice of academic freedom.

ROBERT BIERSTEDT

Chairman, Dep't. of Sociology and Anthropology,
The City College

New York City

Safely Beyond Reach

Dear Sirs: Ralph Nader's article, "The Safe Car You Can't Buy," which appeared in your April 11 issue, should be reprinted by the millions and distributed throughout the country at once! There must be something left that the average citizen can do to keep from being swamped by such immorality!

Has the U.A.W. done anything about this?

FLORENCE GREEN

New York City

Critiques on a Critic

Dear Sirs: The best that Maurice Grosser, your art reviewer, can say about Joan Miró is that his work is "handsome," "the ownership of a Miró is as good as a check in the bank" [*The Nation*, April 11]. Is this praise due a painter of Miró's stature?

If art is important to man, we would expect *The Nation* to be the first to affirm this importance. This it ought to do by avoiding the opinions of Maurice Grosser, who consistently rejects, by implication if not overtly, every valid art movement of this century. It is shocking to find Dadaism, Surrealism, Freud and communism lumped together as "subversive"; abstract art considered "decorative"; the art of Miró such that Mr. Grosser "was not at all sorry to leave for a breath of fresh air." And Mr. Grosser's final linking of his foot infection with a Miró picture is *Time-Life* skulduggery in its most blatant form.

GEORGE and SUE GILLSON

New York City

Dear Sirs: For some time I have been reading the articles by Mr. Grosser and find that they evoke unusual interest among my artist colleagues. His review of Ben Shahn in your March 21 issue is an example of stimulating and vital art criticism.

MYRON MAYERS

New York City

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The Nation, Apr. 25, 1959. Vol. 188, No. 17

The Nation, published weekly (except for omission of four summer issues) by The Nation company and copyright 1959, in the U.S.A. by the Nation Associates, Inc., 333 Sixth Avenue, New York 14, N. Y. Second class postage paid at New York, N. Y.

Subscription Prices Domestic—One year \$8. Two years \$14. Three years \$20. Additional postage per year, Foreign and Canadian \$1.

EDITORIALS

Mr. Dulles and Mr. Eisenhower

John Foster Dulles' critics will not begrudge him credit for three salient virtues: a sense of history, a sense of a mission and great personal courage. He has been patriotic according to his lights, and he has tried, if often mistakenly, to learn from the past. Thus it is no service to Mr. Dulles himself to assert, in the moment of his departure, that he was the greatest Secretary of State since (or including) Thomas Jefferson; history will decide his place. Nor should his loss be regarded as irremediable, even if he were all the President thinks he is. What the situation calls for, rather, is a resolution on the part of Mr. Eisenhower — no matter whom he chooses as Mr. Dulles' successor — to assume the role of leadership in foreign affairs which American history traditionally assigns to the President, and which Mr. Eisenhower should never have renounced.

Mr. Nixon Sniffs the Wind

In his role of sober statesman, Vice President Nixon, after consultation with his counsel and unofficial campaign manager, Attorney General William P. Rogers, Jr., proposed that the United States and the Soviet Union lay their future differences before the International Court of Justice at The Hague. To take this suggestion literally is to miss the point with unerring aim. The Soviet Union has about as much use for the World Court as a drowning man has for water, and the abhorrence of the United States is only slightly less. The Connally Amendment of 1946 prescribes that the United States has the sole right to decide whether it will accept the jurisdiction of the World Court in any instance, which is like a businessman declaring that he will refuse to be sued if he thinks the case may go against him. Moreover, if a serious question of foreign policy were involved, even on an exploratory basis, it would not be for Mr. Nixon to launch the trial balloon. Just the same, what Mr. Nixon said has great importance. *The Nation* once referred to Mr. Nixon as an opportunist who works both sides of the street, but it has never said that he is a stupid opportunist. On the contrary, as an indefatigable and dedicated climber, he has talents which it would be foolish to minimize. His

political scent is acute and far-reaching. The Red hunt gave him his opportunity and raised him to eminence. But now he smells the rewards elsewhere, and in a strange place — the cause of peace. If the Vice President's nostrils lead him, by however circuitous a route, in the direction of international conciliation, we may rely on it that he scents votes, and lots of them. Which is only another way of saying that where once the fears of the American people could be exploited in the Red hunt, now their fear of atomic destruction, and their preference for survival, can be exploited — and by all means let it be. The corollary is that for the Democrats to follow the lead of Senator Symington and others who put their trust in more and bigger aircraft and missiles is political folly. Mr. Nixon has something, and they had better have it too, if they don't want bad news in 1960.

The Tough-Minded

The most remarkable thing about the disturbing observations cited by Walter Schneir (see page 355) is that they are made. Why should anyone be interested in the amount of strontium-90 in the bones of young children? Who cares that a few thousand people will get leukemia or bone cancer from the nuclear tests already conducted? Or, if testing is resumed, that future victims will be counted in the tens or hundreds or thousands of thousands? Or, in the event of an all-out nuclear war, that humanity may be wiped out completely?

There may be answers to such questions, like the succinct reply of the mechanic who gave two dollars to the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy: "Two kids" (see page 357). Religion and ethics will provide broader, though not necessarily better, answers. But it must not be overlooked that there are numerous persons, some in very high positions, who act as if warfare were of little consequence. It has just come to light, through members of the Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy, that a 60-megaton hydrogen bomb is in the study stage in the Pentagon. Sixty megatons is about 4,000 times the output of the Hiroshima bomb, which killed some 100,000 human beings (and people are still dying from its effects). Presumably, nuclear scientists and engineers in the Soviet "Pentagon" are

projecting, with equal insouciance, 60-megaton bombs which differ from ours only in that they will kill all Americans while ours will kill all Russians. The denizens of the Pentagons are human by all the accepted criteria. They wear trousers, they say, "Excuse me," when they step on each other's toes, they have children of their own and take them to pediatricians when they have sore throats. But is there not a fundamental difference? William James spoke of the "tender-minded" and the "tough-minded." Technology has driven the two types so far apart that it is difficult to realize they are still members of the same species.

'War, Death and Broken Dreams'

Recently, The Sacramento *Bee* sent Thor Severson, an education reporter, to bring back a word picture of "the romance of childhood dreams." After talking with a group of ten-year-old fifth graders, however, Severson found that instead of romance, he had uncovered "a story of war and death and broken dreams — the simple plaint of children voiced in the innocence of freckles, braids and crew cuts." These youngsters "have come to accept war, in their lifetime, as inevitably as they accept tomorrow," said Severson. "War is always in the papers and on television — and other kids talk about it, just like the grownups," one of Severson's fifth graders told him. "Isn't there going to be a war?"

One youngster, like so many of his schoolmates, wanted to reach the moon. Why? "Well, when we go to war, we can shoot down rockets on the enemy." Another ten-year-old had dreams of Mars as well as the moon, but felt it would take awhile to make it. First, he said, "there will probably be a war over them . . . a lot of important minerals. People always fight over something they want."

These aren't Orwellian monsters, looking forward to war *à la* 1984; these are our children, responding to the influences of the world about them, the world that grownups have made.

Mr. Mboya and the Missionaries

Missionaries are supposed to teach aborigines to wear trousers to church on Sunday, not necessarily to teach them to think. The education of Tom Mboya, youthful African nationalist leader, seems to have been a marked exception to the traditional pattern. Not that this graduate of Kenya's missionary schools wasn't decently covered when he addressed a Carnegie Hall audience last week on the occasion of African Freedom Day, sponsored by the American Committee on Africa. He wore, as a matter of fact, flowing and colorful native garb, a circumstance which added a certain piquancy to his thoroughly felicitous English. He spoke softly but with infinite confidence, as befits a black man who

comes from a country where there are 6,000,000 blacks and 40,000 whites. But what really enthralled his audience were his simple expressions of faith in the principles laid down in such treasured American documents as the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, and his conviction that these principles are as valid for Africans as they are for Americans. This, of course, is where the missionary echoes are apparent; after all, these documents are no more than the political reflection of good Christian canon.

Of course, good Christians don't believe in violence, and Mr. Mboya likes it no better than his teachers. But he pointed out, in his gentle, insistent voice, that white people often display a distorted view of violence: Mau Mau is violence, the Algerian revolt is violence, black riots in Kenya and Nyassaland are violence; but, in the curious lexicon of the colonial powers the torture of Algerians, the wholesale war on the Mau Mau, the suppression of the South African blacks somehow turn out to be not violence, but merely an extension of the fringe benefits of democracy, so to speak.

Mr. Mboya is right, of course. Yet in the world we live in there is nothing so illogical as the use of logic: how are 40,000 whites to maintain their supremacy over 6,000,000 blacks without violence? The answer, obviously, is implicit in the question; in a democracy, the whites won't have any supremacy to preserve. Mr. Mboya has summed up the whole situation neatly. What African blacks are looking for is the recognition of Africa as an entity — not as Belgian Africa, or British or French Africa, but simply as Africa. It doesn't seem too much to ask.

Help for Moiseyev

Igor Moiseyev, director of the Russian folk dance troupe which visited here last year, has been chided by the Ministry of Culture for the relatively unqualified enthusiasm of his report on America's cultural health. A few anecdotes relevant to Western decadence would have made his observations more palatable.

This reproof, mild though it was, would seem to support those who believe that citizens of the USSR are told not only what they must do, but also what they must think. However, Mr. Moiseyev demonstrated on his visit that he was an amiable guest as well as a fine artist, and we would not wish him to suffer for his admiration of us. If he needs an anti-American cultural incident to prove his loyalty, we offer the following:

Robert Moses, New York City Park Commissioner, has informed the New York Shakespeare Festival that it may not perform in Central Park this summer unless it charges admission. This order is issued after three enormously successful seasons during which the festival was specifically instructed *not* to charge admission to plays performed on park property and during which

Joseph Papp, director of the festival, repeatedly explained why his policy of free plays was economically necessary (the costs of a "commercial" season would far outstrip any possible revenue from ticket sales). Mr. Moses' astounding reason for the new demand is that the Shakespeare audiences are "eroding" the grass and he must be reimbursed with 10 per cent of the projected box office. The commissioner is in many ways an ir-

ritating man, but he is not a blockhead and he knows that a few hundred square feet of idle lawn cannot be equated with Shakespeare under the stars for New York's theatre-hungry populace. What really galls him, we suspect, is that the festival is the most popular public entertainment that has been added to the New York scene in years — and it was not engendered by the relentless paternalism of Robert Moses.

ON THE H-BOMB FRONT: I

Strontium-90 in U. S. Children . . by Walter Schneir

ACCORDING to a report which the Atomic Energy Commission has had in its hands for some time, but has not made public, the quantity of strontium-90 concentrated in the bones of American children up to age four doubled in the one-year period ending December, 1957.

This is by far the greatest one-year increase for children recorded since the AEC instituted a worldwide study of the skeletal absorption of the cancer- and leukemia-causing element. In terms of strontium units (S.U.) per gram of bone calcium, the American child in the 0-to-4 age group has been absorbing strontium-90 at accelerating rates. Here is the average level as of December 30 of each of the following years:

1954	0.38
1955	0.56
1956	0.67
1957	1.33 (app.)

Since the last figure is based on bone analyses made *before* last year's series of American and Soviet nuclear-bomb tests began, it is already seriously out of date. There is every indication that the situation is much worse today.

The report which the AEC is now sitting on is entitled "Strontium-90 in Man, III"; it is the third of a series drawn up for the commission as part of Project Sunshine, launched in 1953 to keep abreast of the

strontium-90 count in fallout from nuclear-explosion tests. These three reports represent the lion's share of all AEC research on strontium-90 in human bone.

The authors of the reports are Dr. J. Laurence Kulp, professor of geochemistry at Columbia University and a team of scientists working with him at the university's Lamont Geological Laboratories in Palisades, New York. The first of Dr. Kulp's reports was published in *Science*, a respected but highly technical publication of limited circulation, in February, 1957—three years and seven months after the Lamont laboratory team had begun its urgent research. The second report was published exactly a year later, again in *Science*. Neither report was released to the general press by the Atomic Energy Commission.

Scientific circles assume that the third and most recent report was presented to the AEC not later than January, 1959, which means that the commission has been sitting on it for at least three months.

MANY scientists are asking why, in the nearly six years since Project Sunshine was initiated, only two reports—the last one more than fourteen months ago—have reached the public. And they are also asking why *Science* seems to have acquired exclusive rights to material which is of vital and immediate interest to the American people. It is recalled that on March 24, Chairman John A. McCone of the Atomic Energy Commission told the Joint

Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy:

... Finally, I assure this Committee emphatically and unequivocally that so long as I am chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission I shall not be a party to the suppression or distortion of any information bearing on the safety and health of the American public.

There is every reason to believe that at the time Mr. McCone spoke these words, the third Kulp report was already on file in his office and had been carefully gone over by Dr. Willard F. Libby, sole scientist member of the AEC.

HOW MANY additional cases of leukemia, bone cancer and other diseases will be caused by the increased absorption of strontium-90 as shown in the third Kulp report, no scientist can say with certainty. Out of a welter of conflicting statements and opinions, however, one irrefutable fact emerges: people throughout the world will suffer death and illness from the nuclear tests conducted to date—and the effects of these tests will still be felt by mankind 10,000 years from now. The only debatable point is whether the victims of bomb-testing should be counted in the thousands, hundreds of thousands, or millions.

Without attempting to pinpoint the extent of the peril, one can indicate the seriousness of the Kulp findings in terms of the so-called Maximum Permissible Concentration (MPC) of strontium-90. This radioactive form of the harmless

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April 25, 1959



St. Louis Post-Dispatch
Rx: A Drop a Day

metal, strontium, was spawned by the first atomic blast in 1945. The International Commission on Radiological Protection, with almost no data available to help it reach a decision (most of what there was arose out of a series of tragedies caused by misuse of radioactive substances), set an MPC of 1,000 strontium units for the small number of adults then working in atomic energy plants. The H-bomb, which made radioactive strontium a health problem for the entire world, changed the picture. Puzzled experts, painfully aware of their ignorance, were called upon to set an MPC for a barely-known poison which was being absorbed into the bones of nearly three billion people. Finally, an arbitrary figure of 100 S.U. was set for the general population.

The Kulp findings indicate that the level of strontium-90 in the bones of American children has been climbing steadily from 1/260th of the MPC in 1954-55 to about 1/75th of the MPC in 1957-58. But the Kulp findings are an *average* for the 0-to-4 age group; a higher concentration was found in the one-year-old group—about 1/55th of the MPC. *Continued fallout from earlier tests, as well as from the new, heavy tests of 1958 which occurred after the third Kulp report, may mean that the level of concentration today for young children is certainly no less than 1/30th of the MPC*

for the 0-to-4 age group as a whole, and 1/25th for one-year-olds—and may be much higher.

On the basis of these figures, it would appear that it is not the concentrations so far revealed that are alarming; it is the trend. Yet even this consolation is denied us. For the fact remains that the fixing of 100 S.U. as an MPC was more or less arbitrary; many scientists believe that the figure is much too high for safety. The National Academy of Sciences has mentioned 50 S.U. as a possible MPC; other authorities have suggested 10 S.U. as an absolute maximum. And there are scientists who deny that there is any such thing as an MPC. Last month Dr. Russell H. Morgan, chairman of the Surgeon General's National Advisory Committee on Radiation, told a Congressional subcommittee that use of the term "Maximum Permissible Concentration" to signify a "safe" level of radiation is misleading. Dr. Morgan added: "There is no such thing as a safe level of radiation."

Curiously, the AEC has had information in its files for two years which, in a sense, anticipated the trend subsequently revealed by the Kulp findings. In 1957, Dr. Leslie Machta, of the United States Weather Bureau, advanced the theory that stratospheric fallout is not uniform, but tends to "band" at the Temperate Zone of the Northern Hemisphere. Dr. Libby continues to reject this theory in favor of his own: that fallout is uniform throughout the world. (Dr. Machta's theory was apparently substantiated when headlines throughout the country early this month reported that the United States was getting the heaviest fallout of any country in the world.) Then, on July 29, 1957, a dozen scientists appeared at a special meeting called by the AEC's Division of Biology and Medicine. The scientists, among whom was Dr. Libby, warned that if Dr. Machta's predicted fallout from "banding" occurred, and testing continued, future skeletal concentrations in young persons in the northeastern United States would reach 10 to 25 S.U. "in the next several years."

But the AEC never published this warning, any more than it has so

far published the most recent of the Kulp findings.

CHAIRMAN McCONE has insisted that the AEC "has not been derelict in its duty in studying radioactive fallout." Its derelictions in reporting to the public what it has learned have already been pointed out in these columns, and by Senator Clinton P. Anderson, chairman of the Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy; by Representative Chet Holifield; by Senator Hubert H. Humphrey, and others. But has it really been learning enough?

Scientists to whom I have talked respect the work being done at the Lamont laboratories, and none among them is inclined to question Dr. Kulp's findings *so far as they go*. Yet the truth is that the findings are based on a minuscule number of samplings. Skeletal parts are sent to the laboratories from all over the world. The Kulp reports show that the findings for the 0-to-4 age group were based on the following number of samplings from year to year: 1954, 18; 1955, 54; 1956, 39.

Of these 111 samples encompassed in the first two Kulp reports, *only 46 came from American children, and these 46 were residents of only four cities: Boston, New York, Denver and Houston*. The number of samplings encompassed by the unreleased third Kulp report will not add measurably to these totals.

The limitations of this federally endowed project become apparent when it is compared with the privately financed research now being done under the auspices of the Greater St. Louis Citizens' Committee for Nuclear Information. This private group is collecting baby teeth for its strontium-90 studies, and expects to analyze at least 1,000 samples annually and to issue monthly reports on findings. For a truly world-wide project, such as Dr. Kulp's, most scientists would agree that tens of thousands of samples should be analyzed annually. The samples, moreover, must be chosen with due regard to the fact that strontium-90 in the soil and food of rural areas may run 100, or even 1,000, times higher than in urban areas.

The disparity in strontium-90 level

that exists between rural and urban areas (the Kulp data does not include rural areas) points up the meaninglessness, in terms of the individual, of results which are couched solely in broad "averages." Even those Kulp reports which have been published lack significance in this sense, for the AEC has not permitted inspection of the raw data on which the published results were based. Thus there is no means of knowing how many of the children encompassed by the Kulp studies had concentrations many times larger than the average. An adequate research program would also seek to

test a current theory that adults, who have a less uniform skeletal distribution of strontium-90 than children, are now forming radiation "hot spots" in their bones.

Many scientists agree that more attention must be paid to elements other than strontium-90 which are included in fallout. Dr. Linus Pauling, Nobel Prize-winner in biochemistry, has said that the 10 per cent increase in human tissue of long-lived carbon-14 which has been reported by the AEC will mean millions of bomb-test casualties over the next 10,000 years. Major General Herbert Loper, the Pentagon's top atomic-

energy expert, acknowledged in correspondence with Dr. Libby that carbon-14 and cesium-137 are a danger to about one person in 500,000, which means that, globally, these two fallout products alone imperil 5,500 persons.

Early next month Representative Chet Holifield (Dem., Calif.), chairman of the Subcommittee on Radiation of the Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy, will call the first witnesses for the second Congressional fallout hearings in two years. The American people have a lot to learn, and not much of it will be good.

ON THE H-BOMB FRONT: 2

Beachhead on 42nd Street . . by Dan Wakefield

BETWEEN Times Square and Sixth Avenue a constant human river runs on the gray bedrock of New York's 42nd Street, banked by the nervously moving glare of neon that jumps at the eye before dark and plate-glass windows heavy with "sales." The BeeSee bookshop advertises pin-ups and the Supreme Detective Agency claims "We Give You Peace of Mind—Missing Persons Located." On a recent gray and drizzly day, a theatre marquee was promising "Emile Zola's Shocker *Nana*. . . Strips Down to Bare Facts." A few doors east, some different facts were on display in a store window, below a blue and white sign that asked "Suicide or Sanity?"

The facts up for public observation in the store were not, like the "Bare Facts" of *Nana*, commonly displayed in the area. The window held a geiger counter, marked magazine articles explaining the effect of strontium-90 on the milk we drink, statements by Albert Schweitzer and Linus Pauling on the dangers of nuclear fallout, a long photograph showing the flattened landscape of Hiroshima after the A-bomb and, perhaps as a small concession to the ambience of the district, a flash-board hooked to an "Electronic Brain" inside that challenged all

comers to a game of Tic-Tac-Toe. A loudspeaker told the passing stream that this was a free exhibition sponsored by the New York Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy.

In the back of the store, where folding chairs were assembled for small audiences, a young volunteer worker took time out to explain what had been going on. The volunteer, Morty Ryweck, was a quiet and personable insurance broker.

The exhibit, he said, was part of the committee's national program of "Acts for Peace," and it was planned for two weeks, but public response and donations were such that they had held out for four. This was to be the last day. There was the air about the place that pervades a circus before it breaks camp, and coupled with the wet and chilly day which kept the stream outside moving even more quickly on its route, the atmosphere was lulled and quiet. Morty Ryweck explained that this was not typical, that they had had busy days.

"We had speakers every day at lunch—very good crowds, and men came to speak like Algernon Black, Stanley Isaacs of the City Council, the Reverend Donald Harrington of Community Church, and Dr. Hugh Wolfe, head of the physics department at Cooper Union. One day a couple of students from the Fordham debating team came up and

presented regular debating arguments for banning nuclear tests and then let the crowd do the questioning. We've been open from 11:30 in the morning till 11:30 at night, and every day a different neighborhood group provides the volunteer workers—we have more than seventy such neighborhood groups here."

Marvin Gewirtz, executive secretary of the New York committee, has estimated that during the four weeks of the exhibition, which closed last week, about 6,000 people signed the petition urging support of the Geneva negotiations for a ban on nuclear testing. The crowds, in general, had seemed sympathetic; Morty Ryweck said the main complaint seemed to be that "We shouldn't trust the Russians":

"Many people have said 'Why don't you set up a center like this in Moscow?' Well, we've tried to explain that our whole position is in favor of a *mutual* ban of tests among the United States, Britain and Russia through reaching an enforceable agreement at the Geneva Conference that's going on now. We are *not* asking for unilateral halting."

A COUPLE of kids who probably spend such afternoons in the Broadway penny arcades were around the Tic-Tac-Toe game now; at the long table in the front, four or five citizens were skeptically eying the lit-

DAN WAKEFIELD is a staff contributor.

April 25, 1959

erature. The volunteer behind the desk was a slightly balding man in a conservative sportcoat and slacks who turned out to be a dentist from Queens. He politely asked an elderly gentleman staring at the petition if he cared to sign. The old man looked up and snapped: "Can you trust the Russians?"

"You don't have to," the dentist explained. "We'll have an inspection system on them."

"I don't think I'd put my gun away and let the other fellow keep his—negotiations or not, Khrushchev is no good. I say carry a gun and a big club and to hell with it."

He turned and marched out under the doorway sign, "Geneva Means Hope," banging his black umbrella as he walked.

A few others walked out after him and a tall Negro boy bearing school-books bent down and signed the petition. He put down the pen and looked up at the dentist with a friendly, but rather hopeless smile.

"You think it'll do any good?" he asked.

"Everything helps."

At the back of the room a young girl was reading committee literature into a microphone that sent her voice through the loudspeaker outside the store. She stood alone in the back with the empty chairs, reading with painstaking care in a steady, gentle voice. A long, brown ponytail fell to her waist; she might have been rehearsing for a school play.

"Strontium-90," she was saying, "falls to the earth like rain. It can cause leukemia, cancer and bone disease. . . ."

Outside, a bunch of teenage boys were looking in the window and talking; one yelled "Boom!" and they laughed and walked away.

Today was the day for the Queens committee to provide the volunteer workers, and Max Fisher, a retired man who lives in that borough of New York, had come in to relieve Ed Kessler, the dentist, behind the literature table. A little later Eleanor Arnold, a Queens housewife who had arranged for a baby-sitter so she could come and help out for a while, joined Mr. Fisher. She said she had been down last Saturday, and that it was "very hopeful—very positive."

"It was always crowded," she said,



Mauldin in St. Louis Post-Dispatch

"Well, Nobody Can Say You Haven't Filled Strauss's Shoes!"

"and there were little groups all over, having discussions. The thing that depressed me, though, was the young people—kids sixteen and seventeen. They seem to have no hope. A few of them were arguing with me about what would happen when we bombed Russia. This one boy looked me straight in the eye and said, 'Maybe I'll be the one who drops it.'"

A clank came from the large metal milk pail set beside the table for donations and a man paused and said, "You're doing a good thing here."

An unshaven young man who had been staring at the poster explaining Linus Pauling's statement on the effects of strontium-90 came to the desk and said, "You mean when they drop one this stuff gets all over our food?"

From the loudspeaker the voice of the girl was saying:

"Time is running out in the worldwide race to nuclear suicide. . . ."

A man who had been examining the window displays walked hurriedly in and set down the tool kit he carried over his shoulder. He wore a green uniform with the words "Electric Supply" stitched over the pocket. He walked quickly to a table that held paper for writing your Senator, yanked out the chair, sat down, and wrote. He put the piece of paper in an envelope, walked to the long table of literature, bent over and signed the petition. He straightened up, reached in his pocket, and

clanked some coins in the milk pail, picked up his tool kit, slung it over his shoulder, and started to go. Max Fisher, who had watched the man in silence, said "Thank you—I see you're interested in our work."

The man looked around and said quickly: "I've got two kids."

Then he was gone.

Vicki Kurzman, the young girl who all afternoon had been reading to the microphone, came over to rest for a moment. She said she was a freshman at Queens College and a member of the student Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy.

"We have a discussion group," she said. "The other day I gave a speech about fallout in my public-speaking class, and the response was very good, but they're so uninformed. I mean, they don't even know the basic facts about strontium-90."

A man in a green windbreaker and brown slacks who had quickly made the rounds of the posters and exhibits throughout the room came suddenly up to the table, his face red, and shouted: "You wanna know something, folks? As an American, I'll take my chances with strontium-90 instead of being unprepared for war with the Russians." He whirled and left, muttering loudly, "I'd like to know what kind of an organization you folks are."

IT WAS quiet for a while — there were those who floated in and floated out in silence, not answering the requests to sign the petition or take some free literature—and then Max Fisher was whispering to Mrs. Arnold that the girl in the red raincoat who had just come in was a heckler who had been there before. The girl came up to the desk and looked at Mrs. Arnold and asked, "What are you doing this for?"

Mrs. Arnold smiled and Max Fisher said, "For the good of the human race."

"That's no reason," the girl said. "You know you can't trust the Russians. They've broken fifty of their last fifty-one treaties."

Mrs. Arnold suggested that perhaps other nations broke treaties too, and you had to hope, you had to start somewhere.

"What treaties have we ever broken?" the girl demanded.

"Well, what about all our treaties with the Indians—the first Americans?" Mrs. Arnold asked.

"The Indians?" the girl shouted. "The Indians don't count. There's hardly any of them."

Vicki Kurzman, the student from Queens, was back at the microphone, her voice coming patiently, steadily, into the room and the street:

"If you agree that your children and future generations of children should not be made to suffer for what we do now, please come in and sign our petition. . . ."

A MAN who had studied the leaflets awhile was signing the petition and said when he finished, "I don't know, I've got a feeling we'll end up doing what we're told regardless."

So many came and signed and seemed hopeless; so many came and argued a while and then listened, and signed and said well, it probably wouldn't do much good, but. . . . And the crackpots came—the

old man with the gray stubble on his cheeks and the yellow cigar-holder and the announcement that he was a student of theology, electronics and medicine, and was going to start a Health Foundation that would expose the American Medical Association; the man came who wanted to transform the English language according to Bernard Shaw's prescription. The kid came who signed a postcard to his Senator and wrote in at the bottom: "Let's make Puerto Rico the fifty-first state of the union." The lady came who said she had heard that this place was "Red-infested." The tall, dignified man came who didn't want to sign the petition until he had checked to see if it was on the Attorney General's list. The pretty young woman whose husband had been killed in Korea came and explained to a visitor that she was doing this work because she had a son and she didn't want what had happened once to happen twice.

"How long can we put off salvation?" the voice from the loud-speaker asked.

It was getting dark, and a new trickle of people was passing through, but they were largely silent. A visitor sitting at the corner of the literature table idly picked up a copy of Nevil Shute's novel about atomic destruction — *On the Beach* — and flipped to the front. A quote from T. S. Eliot began the book:

In this last of meeting places

We grope together

And avoid speech

Gathered on this beach at the tumid river. . . .

A gray-haired lady had just come in who wanted to do some reading at the microphone, because she wanted to "help the cause of peace." She read from Albert Schweitzer and her words echoed out, deep and crackling, into the human stream of 42nd Street, swollen now by the end of the work day, hurrying home down the neon shores.

ROCKEFELLER'S FAST START . . by James Desmond

Albany, N.Y.

MR. ROCKEFELLER's legislative record as freshman Governor of New York is in the books now and on the basis of it two things would appear evident. The first is that Rockefeller demonstrated a political grasp to match any professional in putting through the program best calculated to enhance his status as a contender for the Republican Presidential nomination in 1960. The second is that, as of right now, he has decided that 1960 is his year of destiny.

The decision arises quite naturally out of the legislative and political performance the Governor put on in the first three months of this year. Though Rockefeller established himself as a national political figure when he won New York by more than 550,000 against the national Democratic sweep last November, he could

have been clobbered by a Republican Legislature led by two disappointed gubernatorial hopefuls, Senate Majority Leader Walter J. Mahoney and Assembly Speaker Oswald D. Heck. That he wasn't is due, in addition to the charm which he radiates so effortlessly, to his toughness, his resilience in compromise and, above all, his patience in holding his Sunday punch until the timing is exactly right. Besides, he's very lucky.

Luck was a very large factor in making the Governor's legislative record. For one thing, no single issue arose to stir passions and emotions to the point where any decision would have alienated a large bloc of voters, and through them, the legislators. For another, the Democratic leadership and the Democratic members split on strategy and tactics, with the consequence that their opposition was confused, rambling and ineffective right up to the Legislature's closing day.

All this combined to enable Rockefeller to wind up his first legislative session with a list of accomplishments with definite national appeal. In Albany, the record is considered to outshine the 1943 legislative session which Thomas E. Dewey in his first term as Governor used as his springboard to the Republican nomination for President in 1944.

Touching just the high points, Rockefeller put through a tough and unpopular tax program designed to take care of the state's fiscal problems for at least four years; the first union-racketeering law in the country; a railroad commuter act to ease local taxes on the railroads; an extension of rent controls; a middle-income housing program of vast proportions; an extension of emergency unemployment insurance and a broadening of jobless pay benefits, and a series of bills aimed at organized crime.

His one conspicuous failure was the defeat of an omnibus banking

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bill to define the areas of operation for savings banks and bank holding companies. But this was neither a party measure nor an issue that greatly stirred anybody except bankers, who were themselves divided, so the net political effect was negligible.

SINCE all government policy depends on the budget, the tax program was the foundation of the Rockefeller legislative record. And in handling it, he exhibited all of his political qualities: audacity in his proposals, toughness in sticking by the main objectives, resilience in giving a little here or there to achieve the over-all goal and, of course, patience in waiting out recalcitrants.

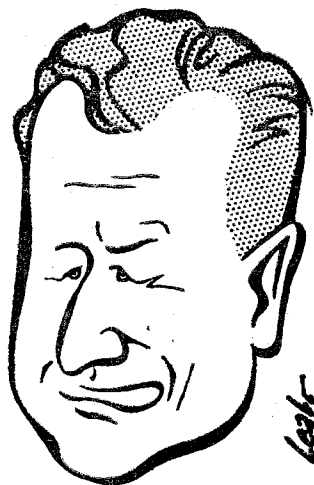
Against all tradition, the first step in the tax program was taken in January — a full two weeks before Rockefeller sent his \$2 billion-plus budget to the Legislature. Teaming with Senate Majority Leader Mahoney, who is unquestionably the most powerful man in the Legislature, the Governor brought up his plan for a 2-cent increase in the gasoline tax and whipped it through in seven days. It was signed at once.

This was a bold operation, planned to get the increase on the books before the powerful gasoline and auto-club lobbies could swing into action. But it had two side effects that augured well for the administration. First, it showed that most GOP legislators would take the administration's plans without argument (only a handful of Republicans voted nay). And, second, it exposed the bankruptcy of the Democratic strategy. Having talked about a gas-tax rise in the past, the Democrats found themselves stifled by a strict party gag that called for a *pro forma* party vote against the Rockefeller plan—and no debate.

This turned out to be a serious tactical error. The gas-tax rise was calculated to cost the average motorist, who is assumed to burn 1,000 gallons a year, about \$20, which was far more than the income-tax increases soon to be put forward would mean to the low-income taxpayer. By forswearing debate on the gas tax, however, the Democrats gave up a point they could have made in

their later opposition, in behalf of the poor, to the income taxes.

The Governor's income-tax proposals, which cut personal exemptions from \$2,500 for a married couple and \$1,000 for the single taxpayer to a flat \$600 for each dependent (including the taxpayer), came as a shock, particularly as they were wrapped up in a \$2 billion budget—largest in the state's history. Earlier, Rockefeller had talked about a budget under \$2 billion and a tax increase of about \$230 million; now he was asking for a bigger budget and a tax increase of \$277 million. Nevertheless, the immediate reac-



Governor Rockefeller

tion ranged from wholehearted applause to nothing much worse than cautious opposition. For the first couple of weeks in February, at least, no Republican spoke out flatly against the tax program, although some grumbled privately.

At this point Senate Leader Mahoney, who makes a fetish of asserting legislative prerogatives, insisted on tinkering with the proposals, mainly to avoid giving the public the impression that the legislators were ready to "rubber stamp" anything the Governor laid before them. But he made it clear that he had obtained the Governor's approval of his proposed changes. In the end, budget expenditures were reduced by \$35 million, but still remained well above the \$2 billion mark. Mahoney also put through an amendment of the original Rockefeller tax plan, which had called for a \$10 rebate on each tax return; the bill, as finally

passed, maintained the \$10 rebate for the single taxpayer, but allowed a \$25 rebate for the married taxpayer. (Under the old tax law, it will be remembered, single persons were allowed \$1,000 exemption, married persons, \$2,500; the Mahoney amendment on rebates, then, restored the former balance as between married and single taxpayers.)

Delay in working out these changes had encouraged some of the grumblers in the Assembly to believe that the leaders were preparing to fight the Governor. On this bad guess, they began to speak out openly, claiming enough votes to upset the budget.

THE claim was patently overstated. At no time during the mis-called "tax revolt" did the opposition have enough cohesion to constitute a bloc. And, although Speaker Heck had to call two party conferences to line up his votes, the budget was never in danger of defeat in the Assembly. That is to say, at any time Heck could have picked up the votes he needed simply by using his broad powers to compel discipline; he refrained because the Governor preferred cajolery to the lash. In the Senate, of course, the program was never even questioned once it got Mahoney's imprimatur. Two Syracuse Republican Senators voted no — with Mahoney's permission — because they were under pressures at home that might have jeopardized their re-election next year. Significantly, neither of them ever publicly attacked the budget.

The effect of the tax program on Rockefeller's popularity within the state is still a matter of debate. The income tax went on a withholding basis on April 1, and those close to the Governor profess to believe that once the taxpayers get used to it, they will gradually forget whatever bitterness they felt when the boosts were first proposed. What this bitterness amounted to is anyone's guess. Certain sections of the press joined in condemning the tax program at the outset, but gradually eased off assaults; in other sections, Rockefeller got kudos all the way for his courage.

Outside the state — and that, re-

The NATION

"BOSTON, April 2—For nearly four hours today, Judge Michael A. Musmanno, of the Pennsylvania State Supreme Court pleaded 'in the name of universal justice' for a posthumous pardon for the principals in the celebrated Sacco-Vanzetti Case."
—New York Times, April 3, 1959.

"One of the few achievements of Herman Welker and William Jenner — neither of whom, happily, any longer serves in the United States Senate—was the indictment of Mr. and Mrs. John Powell and their co-defendant, Julian Schuman, under the 1917 Sedition Act. . . . Stemming from the miasmatic political atmosphere of the cold war, the charges are without substance and should be dropped."—The Nation, April 4, 1959.

"Facts on their face indicate abuse of prosecuting function. Trial would have damaging implications for American justice."—From telegram by Roger N. Baldwin to John Powell on eve of "sedition" trial, Jan., 1959.

Must Tragic History Be Repeated?

TODAY AGAIN, as in the Nineteen Twenties, a hysteria-incited prosecution threatens the liberties—perhaps the lives—of people in America.

What was done to Sacco and Vanzetti, most lovers of liberty agree, was horrible and shameful. But posthumous "pardons," even if granted, could not help them now.

Let us look to the living! Let Americans come awake now—before it is too late—to the danger that threatens three victims of another, newer witch-hunt case: the Justice Department's relentless prosecution of the Powells and Schuman!

Unanswered Questions in the Powell-Schuman Case

¶WHY did the Justice Department wait nearly three years before deciding to charge these three editors with "seditious" writing and publishing?

¶WHY did Senators Jenner and Welker, of McCarthyite fame, try to force the Powells and Schuman to "cooperate" in their China-Lobby-slanted "investigations"?

¶WHY, when they refused, did word go forth

from the Justice Department that "*this case is a political must*"?

¶WHY did the Department, failing to convict them after *another three years*, suddenly come up with an ominous new charge—"treason"?

¶HOW can any American journalist, any American citizen, be secure in his fundamental rights if such a prosecution is permitted to succeed?

Year after year, while we criticize what is done to outspoken writers in other lands, John and Sylvia Powell and Julian Schuman have been harassed, defamed, financially ruined under the lash of a prosecution for what they thought, wrote and published.

Today they are the victims of a new charge, threatening penalties of from five years' imprisonment to death!

We ask all those who value human rights to communicate — now — with:

ATTY. GEN. WILLIAM P. ROGERS
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
WASHINGTON, D. C.

Tell him of your belief, in the name of American justice and fair play, that it is time to drop the Powell-Schuman prosecution!

POWELL-SCHUMAN DEFENSE FUND
P.O. Box 1808
San Francisco 1, Calif.

Please Write—Please Contribute!

Charles Mattox, Treas.
Powell-Schuman Defense Fund
P.O. Box 1808
San Francisco 1, Calif.

Dear Sir:

I have ☐ written ☐ wired to the Attorney General, asking him to drop the prosecution.

I enclose ☐ check ☐ cash in amount \$.....
to help the defense fund.

Name.....

Address.....

This advertisement paid for through public contributions

April 25, 1959

member, is where Rockefeller is now looking for 1960 delegates (after all, he will control the New York delegation) — the press reaction has been generally good, particularly in states now in financial jams. This could be a convention factor next year.

IN THE TAX program, as later in his railroad-commuter program — the only other piece of Rockefeller legislation to run into sticky going — the Governor showed his ability to adjust to political realities without yielding anything important. His basic premise, in the tax program, was to broaden the base and make the state tax system conform to the federal system. That is exactly what he achieved.

The railroad-commuter program, which is aimed at cutting local real-estate taxes for railroads in financial distress, was the only new legislative proposal put forward by Rockefeller. It provided, briefly, for cutting real-estate taxes at the local level on a complicated formula that would key assessments to the operating income of the railroad affected. Localities are to be reimbursed by the state for 50 per cent of the tax loss incurred.

Again, the opposition centered in the Assembly. But this time it lasted only overnight and was smoothed out by writing in a proposal for a Public Service Commission investigation of "feather-bedding" on the railroads. The administration plan had called for giving the P.S.C. power to amend the "full crew laws" wherever they were found to impose unnecessary labor costs on the railroads.

The rest of the program — much of which was not initiated by the Governor—literally "sailed" through the legislature. Rent control, to which the Governor had committed himself in the election campaign, was merely an extension of a law that has been extended repeatedly since federal rent control lapsed. The bill for a constitutional amendment, aimed at court reform, which passed for the first time this year (it must be repassed in 1961 by a new Legislature before it can be put up to the people), was strictly a creation of the Senate, which limited reform

chiefly to New York City; and the union-racketeering bill, claimed as an administration program, was a slightly watered-down version of a similar bill passed last year and vetoed by Governor Harriman.

This, in sum, was the positive side of the legislative session for Rockefeller. On the negative side were failure to put through concrete legislation on a broad group of social-insurance reforms, and the failure to take any positive steps — aside from barring new business taxes — to stimulate industrial and economic activity. Both had been key planks in the Rockefeller platform. But the Governor found some things more difficult to enact than to promise. He deferred the social-insurance reforms for at least a year, pending further study; and on economic expansion, he set up a commission to find out what could be done to solve a problem that his predecessor, who in his turn had made similar promises, had found insoluble.

Delay in these two areas could develop into political gain for Rockefeller. From the point of view of a Presidential candidate, it would be better if solutions could be found next year — shortly before the 1960 convention, say — than now.

On balance, therefore, Rockefeller seems to have been a big winner in the legislative session. The parts of his program he enacted have been, on the whole, well received. On the other hand, all governors make promises to stimulate business activity and reduce unemployment, but few find they can reverse the drift of industry to low-tax areas. And the social-insurance promises — health insurance, vested pension rights and transferability of pensions — are "pie in the sky" for workers, nice to dream and talk about, but never really believed in as possibilities.

THROUGHOUT his first session, Rockefeller proved himself something of a curiosity to the Legislature. His huge fortune and famous name, of course, mark him out; in addition, as Governor, he is throwing away a lot of the old rules. While most governors waited in their second-floor offices at the Capitol for invitations to visit the legislative

country on the third floor, Rockefeller is bound by no such inhibitions. He has run up to the third floor for uncounted conferences with ailing Assembly Speaker Heck, who finds it inconvenient to move around after recent foot surgery; to attend a birthday party given by Senator Joseph Zaretzki, the Minority Leader, for his opposite number, Senator Mahoney; or just to chat and visit around.

THIS informality, and the Governor's obvious grasp of state business, have proved to be strong political assets. Any number of obscure legislators, who in the normal course of events might meet the state's chief executive once a year or so, are running into Rockefeller in the corridors and lobbies of the third floor time and again, and finding themselves charmed into his circle of admirers. The Governor is also making a number of local appearances in Albany, and by next month he expects to begin a series of visits around the state to "learn more about local problems," as he puts it.

But although he will stick close to the state, in line with the strategy of waiting until the last minute to expose his hand, in private conversations and in off-the-record remarks the Governor is giving increasing indications that he is about ready to plunge into the Presidential race. Of course, some unforeseen development, such as the death or serious illness of President Eisenhower in the next few months, would put Vice President Nixon in control of the 1960 convention and, probably, make him unbeatable. In such a case, Rockefeller would tend exclusively to his Albany knitting.

There is no doubt that Rockefeller's current optimism about his Presidential chances is due largely to his landslide victory for the governorship last year — a victory achieved in defiance of more experienced political prophets, who thought 1958 to be the "wrong year" for him. And with the Democratic Party apparently intent on riding off in several directions simultaneously, his optimism may be justified. At the moment, the betting here is that he will give it the old college try.

The Nation

SPRING BOOKS

Legend and Symbol in 'Doctor Zhivago'

Edmund Wilson

With Barbara Deming and Evgenia Lehovich

WHEN I wrote about Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago* in *The New Yorker* of November 15, I was aware that the main theme of the book was death and resurrection, which was constantly turning up in the images, the situations and the religious references, but I was only just becoming aware that the characters, all named — as was customary in Russia under the old regime — after saints of the Orthodox calendar, were partly to be understood in terms of the legends of these saints. The more one studies *Doctor Zhivago*, the more one comes to realize that it is studded with symbols and significant puns, that there is something in it of *Finnegans Wake* and something of the cabalistic *Zohar*, which discovers a whole system of hidden meanings in the text of the Hebrew Bible. This kind of thing, of course, is fashionable, and it is sometimes emphasized by critics at the expense of the more important aspects of some work of literature or discovered in works in which it does not exist; but poetic symbolism does really pervade *Zhivago*. It has been plotted and planned by the author; and from the moment one begins to get the sense of this, the story gains another dimension.

I have not reread the book from this point of view, but Mrs. Lehovich and Miss Deming have done so, and have pointed out many implications which are likely to be missed by anyone who is reading it for the first time without knowing what to look for. I am very much indebted to the findings of these readers, which will in some cases be given in their own words.

I mentioned, when I reviewed *Zhivago*, that the name of the hero

EDMUND WILSON's forthcoming book, to be published in early summer, is *Apologies to the Iroquois*.

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"almost corresponded" with the genitive and accusative singular of the adjective *zhivoy*, living: *zhivogo*. I did not know that the old Church Russian form was *zhivago*, and that the opening lines of the novel recall to the Russian reader certain passages from the Gospels and the prayerbook. By means of a play on words, the main theme of death and resurrection is sounded in the second paragraph. The cortege of the funeral of Yury's mother is on its way to the cemetery. People ask, "Whom are they burying?" The answer is simply, "Zhivago." At the beginning of the twenty-fourth chapter of Luke in the text of the Russian Bible, the scene in which the women come to the grave and find the stone rolled away, the angels ask them, "*Chto vy ishchete zhivago mezhdu mertvymi?*" "Why do you seek the living among the dead?" Two variations on this passage occur in the Russian liturgy: "Why do you think the living is among the dead? For God is arisen from the sepulchre"; and "Why seek ye the living among the dead? Why do you mourn the incorruptible amidst the corrupted?" The *g* in the genitive singular of *zhivoy* is ordinarily pronounced as *v*, but in the Biblical form as *g*, so the identification is complete.

THE Russian name Yury is a form of George, and a reference to the legend of St. George throws much light on the role of Zhivago, who specifically appears as the saint in the poem about slaying the dragon. St. George is supposed to have died three times, and three times to have been resurrected, as happens with Yury on the three occasions when he feels himself going under and is revived by his half-brother Evgraf. But the parallel between the legend and the life of Zhivago seems to be

further complicated by a parallel with Pasternak's own career. We find in the history of St. George — as recounted in Voragine's *Golden Legend* — he put off "the habit of knight" and "took that of a Christian man" as a result of the martyrdom of twenty-two thousand Christians, which caused some to renounce their faith, under Diocletian and Maximian — as Pasternak's interest in Christianity is said to date from 1936, when the great purges were getting under way; that for his persistence in preaching Christianity, he was subjected to a series of ordeals, beatings, drinkings of poison, slashings by sword-bristling wheels and immersions in molten lead, from all of which he recovered; and that he was finally compelled to "make sacrifice to the idols" — as Pasternak, who is known in some cases to have refused to sign petitions for the death of Stalin's victims, is said on one or two occasions to have been forced to yield. St. George, when brought to his knees in submission to the pagan deities, stubbornly made his prayer to his own God, whereupon "fire descended from heaven and burnt the temple and the idols and their priests," and "the earth opened and swallowed all the cinders and ashes that were left." We now hear of an official called Dacian, "the provost," who is evidently Maximian himself, since Maximian came from Dacia and since we know that his wife, "Queen Alexandra," was attracted or converted to Christianity (as was also Diocletian's consort). This personage, according to Voragine, was so angry over the blasting of the temple that he exclaimed to his wife, "I shall die for anger if I may not surmount and overcome this man." "Then said she to him, 'Evil and cruel tyrant! ne seest thou not the great virtue of the Christian people? I said to thee well that thou shouldst not do to them any harm, for their God fighteth for them, and know thou well that I will become Christian!' Then was Dacian much abashed and said to her: 'Wilt thou

be Christian?" Then he took her by the hair and did do beat her cruelly." Dacian now ordered George to be beheaded. Alexandra was also a martyr, and her day in the Orthodox calendar is the same as St. George's: April 23.

This story suggests two correspondences. There is the relation, on the one hand, between Larisa and her husband, General Strelnikov, who is carrying out the official line with a severity that turns into terrorism, and, on the other, between Larisa and Zhivago. But there is also a curious possible connection with the life of Pasternak himself. The relations between Pasternak and Stalin are discussed in an article in the December issue of the Russian periodical *Novy Zhurnal*. The author, Mr. Mikhail Koryakov, shows that Pasternak, even in the dangerous years of 1936 and 1937, appeared at literary conferences and gave expression to independent non-official views. His opinions became so abhorrent that his speeches were no longer printed, and one can only get an idea of what they contained from the things that were said condemning them. Yet never in these years of suppression was Pasternak even arrested. Mr. Koryakov comes to the conclusion that there can be no explanation of this, at a time when almost every other Soviet writer of any talent or principle was imprisoned or exiled or shot, except that the word had been given by Stalin that Pasternak was not to be touched. But why, conceivably, should Stalin have protected him? Pasternak published in 1935 a volume of translations from the Georgian poets, but could this have been enough to exempt him? Mr. Koryakov believes that he has found out the reason:

It is connected with the death of N. S. Allilueva, Stalin's wife. Those who knew her say that she was beautiful. "She was elegant and had a good figure. She wore a simple dark blue dress with a white blouse," it is said of her in certain memoirs. "Her hair was combed back smooth with a straight part and a well-arranged knot at the back. She had a natural refinement of manner. Her hands were especially beautiful — one's glance involuntarily lingered on them. It is only in Bryulov's portraits that one

can see hands of such classic shape." . . . There is no doubt that Stalin loved her very much. There are various stories of how she died: one is that Stalin shot her; another that she killed herself; while the official version has it that she died from peritonitis. And there is also the story that the peritonitis had been brought on by a serious wound in the abdomen, and that the shot had occurred at the moment when Stalin was wresting the revolver from her.* It is a fixed rule of the Soviet papers that they never give any publicity to anything that happens in the family of a "party or government leader." But when N. S. Allilueva died, the papers were full of letters and telegrams expressing sympathy for Stalin. Among these was a letter from the Soviet writers, and this of course was an organized affair, as all such expressions of sympathy were. It was signed by thirty-three writers, who included B. Pilnyak, M. Koltsov, S. Dinamov, A. Selivanovsky, L. Averbach, all of whom were to perish in the Yezhov terror. The letter was routine and vulgar, as all such letters were:

"Dear Comrade Stalin!

"It is difficult to find the right words of condolence. Please accept our grief at the death of N. S. Allilueva, who devoted all her strength to the effort of freeing the millions of oppressed humanity, that effort of which you are the leader and for which we are ready to give our lives in affirmation of its indestructible vital force."

Boris Pasternak was not among these thirty-three writers. Though the letter was brought him, he had refused to sign it. The proof of this is that just below the letter, as printed in the *Literaturnaya Gazeta* of November 17, 1932, appears a special postscript by Pasternak, in which he says that he has read the letter, but that rather than sign it, he has added a postscript. Here it is, enigmatic and striking:

"I associate myself with the feeling of my comrades. I had been thinking; the evening before, deeply and persistently of Stalin; for the

*The story I used to hear was that on some occasion when guests were present at dinner, Stalin kept flicking bread pellets at her, and that she afterwards went out and shot herself. There has also been current a legend—significant in this connection—that she opposed Stalin's brutal policies and tried to protect her friends.

E. W.

first time from the point of view of the artist. In the morning I read the news. I was as shaken as if I had been present, as if I had lived it and seen it.

Boris Pasternak"

Whatever were the circumstances of Allilueva's death, it was for Stalin a great misfortune. I heard in Moscow that he would often in the evening drive out to the Novodevichye Cemetery and for hours sit on her grave. It is possible that Pasternak's unconventional and rather mysterious postscript may, if not have shaken Stalin, at least have got under his skin. He could not, in the first place, have failed to be struck by the fact that Pasternak had refused to sign the banal routine letter and had expressed his feeling in his own words — which implied that he did have some feeling! And what did it mean: "I had been thinking, the evening before, deeply and persistently of Stalin," and "in the morning I heard the news"? What mysticism, what "devilry" was this? Stalin was a rough man, but he was not without his "depths." . . . These lines might have set him brooding. And, furthermore, what did it mean that Pasternak, in November, 1932, had "deeply and persistently" thought of him — "for the first time from the point of view of the artist"? Did that mean as a prophet, as a clairvoyant — who might in some sense have "been present" at the moment of Allilueva's death and have "seen" how she died? May we not guess that Stalin had a cold shudder [literally, that ants ran over his body] when he read these lines of the poet? May we not guess that at that moment there was roused in him the traditional oriental tendency to see in the poet a "dervish"? We may remember what Pushkin said about this in his *Journey to Erzerum*: "Pushchin gave me the title of poet. The Pasha folded his hands on his breast and bowed, after saying to me through an interpreter: 'That hour is blessed when we meet a poet. The poet is brother to the dervish. He has no country nor is he blessed with the things of this world; and while we, poor creatures that we are, are worrying about fame, about power, about riches, he stands on a basis of equality with the powerful of the earth, and they must bow to him.'"

Did not Stalin see such a "dervish" in Pasternak? . . . If no actual obeisance was in order, he had at least to be shielded, protected. . . .

I believe that, from that moment, from the 17th of November, 1932, Pasternak, without himself being aware of it, had entered into Stalin's personal life, become in some sense a feature of his spiritual landscape, so that one could not touch Pasternak without personally affecting Stalin.

These, of course, are merely speculations, but in an article that followed Koryakov's in the *Novoe Russkoe Slovo*, Gleb Struve says that it had already been thought that "Pasternak had inspired Stalin with some mysterious fear," and he tells one version of the much-circulated story — supposed to date from about 1931 — of Stalin's having called Pasternak on the telephone. The poet Osip Mandelstam had been arrested for a satirical epigram about Stalin, and Pasternak, on an appeal from Mandelstam's wife, had asked Bucharin to try to get him off. Stalin is supposed to have rung Pasternak up and asked him whether Mandelstam was a good poet, then to have ended by asking why Pasternak never came to see him.

Whatever the reason may have been for Pasternak's unique immunity, this immunity suggests the unexplained authority and the similar inviolability of Yury's half-brother Evgraf in the novel. Evgraf remains mysteriously free: he is always in a position to come to Yury's rescue and to the last he escapes the purges. I believe that Mrs. Lehovitch has discovered the key to Evgraf and to his fairy-story relationship to Zhivago.

IT SEEMS fairly clear [she writes] that Yury Zhivago represents the thinking and idealistic part of Russian society before and after the revolution, which included members of the upper and middle classes, intellectuals and students, merchants and professional people, whose striving for justice and freedom expressed itself in the most varied ways. One might say that Yury was a composite of all the characters who had influenced his childhood and youth, notably of his uncle Nikolai Nikolayevich, a religious philosopher "who was a free man . . . who had a nobleman's feeling of equality with all the living"; of his future father-in-law Alexander Gromeko, a chemistry profes-

sor and an enlightened member of a good Moscow family ("We Gromekos outgrew the passion of covetousness a generation ago"); of his friends and contemporaries: the student Misha Gordon, who is interested in philosophy, theology and philology, and Tonya, who appears as the embodiment of the positive traditional values in these people's way of life.

One half of Doctor Zhivago is all these people. He is Yury-George, the idealistic but still down-to-earth man who, at one point in the book, accepts with such joy the simplicity of living by the labor of his hands: "What happiness to work for oneself and one's family from sunrise to sunset, building a home, cultivating the earth." In the Church calendar, the name George means "cultivator" [Greek: *georgos*, farmer]. The other half of Doctor Zhivago, the element

that makes him unique among all these "men of good will," that saves him as an individual, is embodied in the person of Evgraf.

Evgraf is Yury's *alter ego*, his creative, his poetic self. What are Evgraf's characteristics? He has just come, on his first appearance, from his birthplace or home in Siberia, to which he subsequently returns several times. Siberia seems in general, in the novel, to figure less as an actual locality than as an expression for "lying low" or "going underground," a place to which the various characters withdraw when they have to leave the center of events. (Larisa "goes to Siberia" after the revolutionary outbreaks die down in 1911, and again after the Bolshevik coup, as do Yury Zhivago and his family when, later on, conditions in Moscow become impossible, etc.)

Whenever Evgraf appears, he

Out of the Black

Have you never
stood in the teeth of despair, *lo imperador*
del doloroso regno, Lord of the cold shade?

Do you know your huge self
that from the black pit underlies belief
and to and fro upon the earth goes?

Of grief he has a desolate likeness,
Of accusation he has a part, an army,
a lingering of winter submerged in summer.

A multitude go up into his image and splits apart
into a multitude.

For Judas Iscariot
prepares Christ's passion and Brutus
against the thought of tyranny stands.

Four stones
betray the boundaries of the field to the naked eye.

Where out of sight
the giant dead lie waiting,
moths of the morning.

Time too is crystalline,
and the Great Father of Likelihood
lies hid in the hiding place a moment is.
Under the lemon tree
as I drowsed in the sun I heard
Lucifer's Song in Love of His Lord,
fiery essence, the black desolation
ascending through the created hierarchies
into the light of the Beloved:

O God, from me upward the cry of all grievous being,
a going up of pestilence into the crown,
for I went down into the end of all things
to bring up the spirit of Man before me
into the beginnings of Love.

ROBERT DUNCAN

seems to descend upon Yury—like inspiration—from some higher realm. The first time that Yury sees him is at the moment when he (Yury) is reading the news of the Bolshevik insurrection in the entrance hall of the strange house in Moscow.* “He heard footsteps overhead. Someone was coming downstairs.” When Evgraf turns up in Varykino, Yury writes in his journal: “And there, as if fallen from the clouds, appeared brother Evgraf.” In the concluding chapter, Yury meets Evgraf in the street: “As usual, he seemed to have landed out of the sky.” Evgraf, thus, arrives unexpectedly, nobody knows from whence but always from somewhere above, and when he has given his helping hand, he vanishes. Is it possible for an artist to understand whence or how his creative genius comes? “Strange,” writes Yury, “he is my half-brother and bears the same name as I, and yet I know less about him than I do about anyone else.” The advent of Evgraf, however, may apparently be invoked by writing of a more prosaic kind. It is when Yury has started giving vent to his gloom in his notes called *Playing at Being People*, in Moscow, and afterwards, in Varykino, when he is writing his journal, that Evgraf makes his first two appearances.

Evgraf comes into Yury's life at precisely those times when ordinary living is becoming too hard to bear and when the effort of the struggle to survive is threatening to overwhelm him. He is able to help Yury materially by providing food, leisure, an apartment; and, what is more important, he saves Yury as a human being by making it possible for him to escape into, to right himself by, creative work. Thus, just before Yury's illness, when Evgraf will come to his rescue, the hardships of the Zhiyagos have reached a peak. All their thoughts have been concen-

trated on procuring the bare necessities of life, and Yury is “walking home along the endless stretches of Meshchanskaya Street”* when he feels himself coming down with typhus. Later on, when they are living in Varykino and all Yury's energy is being expended on the tasks of keeping his house heated and his family fed, he wishes that he could find time to write. “The nightingale's song ‘Wake up! Wake up!’ sounded almost like the pre-Easter prayer: ‘Arise my soul, cease slumbering, awaken.’” Evgraf arrives at this moment (as Yury notes in his journal) and promises “to facilitate our household duties so that Tonya would have time to see to Shura's education, and I should have time for my medical and literary work.” Finally, at the end of the book, Yury, who has been finding the air of Moscow more and more difficult to breathe, is “seeking to change his fate”; and Evgraf, who has descended again, “bypassing the minor obstacles of living, . . . conceived a practical plan for helping his brother and saving him. The disappearance and seclusion of Yury Andreyevich were Evgraf's idea and invention.”

But Evgraf's most important function is actually helping Yury to write. It is surely not a coincidence that the name Evgraf in the Russian calendar means “writer” [Greek: *eu-graphos*]. Yury's and Evgraf's collaboration is described at the time of Yury's illness in Moscow when, in the course of his delirious dreaming: “Tonya brings the glowing, penetrating, orange light of the lamp closer to him. . . . Work becomes possible. He is writing feverishly and with extraordinary felicity that which he should have written long ago but never could. And now it all comes out perfectly. He was distracted only from time to time by that boy with the slanting Tartar eyes and the Siberian coat of deerskin. Quite obviously that boy is the spirit of death, even simply his death. But

how can he be that if he is helping him to write a poem? Can death be useful, can it help?” And further on: “I must awaken. I must awaken and arise. I must be resurrected.” Has not Yury given the answer already at an earlier point in the story when he is musing in the cemetery after Anna Ivanovna's funeral?: “Now as never before it was clear to him that art is always, incessantly occupied with two matters. It is constantly meditating on death and, in doing so, constantly creating life.”

That Evgraf is Yury's creative genius is made even clearer by the description of their final meeting: “His brother's support lent wings to Yury Andreyevich. Now, as always before, the secret of his power remained unexplained. Yury Andreyevich did not attempt to penetrate it.”

When Zhivago is dead and his family and friends are gathered in the room where he lies, two people, Evgraf and Larisa, stand out from all the rest: “They did not claim any closer tie with the dead man than the others. . . . Their composure was remarkable, and it produced a strange impression, as if they were involved not only in the funeral but also in the death. . . .” These two, though immortal, *were* Yury. One was his creative genius, the other the life-giving force which for a time he had made his own.

THIS brings us to the question of Larisa: who she is, what she represents. I had noted, when I reviewed the book, that she sometimes has an aspect of Mary Magdalene and that she is often associated with the sea, but I had not yet grasped the significance of this latter association. I have learned since from the Orthodox calendar that Larisa means *sea gull*, *sea bird*; from the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* that the shrine of St. George was built near the legendary scene of the rescue of Andromeda from the sea-monster by Perseus, and that the slaying by St. George of the dragon is supposed to have been derived from this. A letter from a correspondent has added the information that the worship of St. George on the coast of Lebanon is connected with temples to Poseidon. Now, a

*The period of Russian poetry preceding the revolution, that of the Symbolist poets, of whom Blok is the greatest, is called *Serebryany Vek*, the Silver Period. The house in which Yury meets Evgraf stands at the corner of Serebryany and Molchanovka Streets. We can guess which period of Russian literature is represented by Molchanovka, the Street of Silence. E. L.

**Meshchansky*, *meshchanskaya*—pertaining to *meshchane*, the poorest class of townfolk — is an expression commonly used to describe a particularly small and prosaic way of life or point of view. E. L.

pre-Christian mythological Larissa is supposed to have been Poseidon's bride. But why is the Larisa (Lara) of the novel identified with the sea?

Miss Deming, in clearing this up, has brought out what is seen at once to be one of the main poetic themes of *Zhivago*.

IS Lara [she writes] not associated with the sea because it is an image of the free, the spontaneous — the truly alive? Zhivago says, "Life is not . . . a substantial thing. It is something that eternally renews itself" (which could also describe the sea). He speaks of the "sea of life, the sea of spontaneity." On page 391 [of the American translation], Zhivago asks himself: "What was she (Lara) to him? . . . Oh, that question he could always answer. . . . Oh, how sweet to be alive! . . . Oh, the ever-present longing to thank life, thank existence itself, to thank them as one being to another being. This was exactly what Lara was. You could not communicate with life and existence, *but she was their representative, their expression*, in her the inarticulate principle of existence became sensitive and capable of speech." (Italics B.D.)

Is Lara not also associated with the sea — and I would add with wind — because it is "life's storm" that casts Lara and Zhivago together? Zhivago does not choose Lara, he says; does not prefer her to Tonya, his wife. "Ineluctable reality" joins them:

"In years of hardship, in the days
Of an unthinkable existence
She had been cast up from the
depths
By a high wave of destiny."

(Parting)

Lara is associated with the sea — and with wind — in the following passages:

On pages 150-51, in the middle of a stormy night, after she has left Melyuzeyev, there is a knocking at the door of the house where she has been staying, and both Zhivago and Mlle. Fleury go downstairs, hoping to find Lara, who has for some reason returned. There is no one at the door. A gust of wind showers them with cold raindrops. They find that

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a branch knocking on a window has broken a pane, and there are huge puddles on the floor—"and the same thing in what used to be Lara's room — there was a sea, a real sea, an ocean." They go back to their beds, but both continue to imagine Lara outside the house "in the form of a watery wraith." On page 304, Zhivago, living in anticipation through a meeting with Lara, dreams that: "A dark muffled figure will open the door, and the promise of her nearness, unowned by anyone in the

The Hard Structure of the World

Is made up of reservoirs,
Birds flying South, mailmen,
Snow falling or rain falling,
Railmen, Howard Johnsons and airmen
Birds of Paradise
Silk lined caskets

Prize poems and guitars,
Beatitudes and bestiaries,
Children taught contemporary manners,
Time taking time away

With a haymaker or a sleigh,
Hope always belaboring despair.

Form is a jostle, a throstle,
Life a slice of sleight,

Indians are looking out from the
Cheekbones of Connecticut Yankees,
Poltergeists deploy northward
To tinderboxes in cupboards in Maine;

The last chock knocked, the vessel
Would not go down the Damariscotta
Until the sick captain's four-poster,
Moved to the window by four oldsters,
Gave him a sight of her, and
He gave her a beautiful sign;

And there was the witch of Nobleboro
Who confounded the native farmers
Who, having lost the plow-bolt
Right at their feet, found it
Concealed in her apron: she laughed,
And made the earth fecund again.

The hard structure of the world,
The world structure of illusion.
From seeing too much of the world
We do not understand it.

There is something unknown in knowing
Unfaith is what keeps faith going.

RICHARD EBERHART

world . . . will reach him like the first wave of the sea as you run down over the sandy beach in the dark." And on page 452, after he and Lara have been separated, Zhivago muses: "I'll trace your features on paper, as the sea, after a fearful storm has churned it up, traces the form of the greatest, farthest-reaching wave on the sand. Seaweed, shells, cork, pebbles, the lightest, most imponderable things that it could lift from its bed, are cast up in a broken, sinuous line on the sand. This line, endlessly stretching into the distance, is the frontier of the highest tide. That was how life's storm cast you up on my shore, O my pride. . . ." One could also note that when Zhivago first visits her, in Yuryatin, he finds her drawing water from the well. It is again very windy.

I suggest, then, that the sea represents for Pasternak the principle of life itself, which is indicated by the name Zhivago. One finds that Yury himself is associated by Pasternak with water imagery. On pages 89-90, at Anna Ivanovna's funeral, he walks on alone, ahead of the other mourners, and, "In answer to the desolation brought by death to the people slowly pacing after him, he was drawn, as irresistibly as water funnelling downward, to dream, to think, to work out new forms, to bring beauty into being. Now, as never before, it was clear to him that art is always, ceaselessly occupied with two matters. It is constantly meditating on death and, in doing so, constantly creating life." On page 502, when Lara takes leave of him in his coffin, she addresses him, "Farewell, my great one, my kin, farewell my pride, farewell, my swift deep little river, how I loved your day-long splashing, how I loved to plunge into your cold waves." The association of Zhivago with a river is followed here by the association of Lara with rain: her tears "seemed to hold her words together in a tender, quick whispering like the rustling of silky leaves in a warm, windy rain." Lara and Zhivago are cast together because they are kin — water flowing to water.

On Page 229 Pasternak describes a stream bed, tucked up in the snow like a child in its cot, which in spring

will rush down to the viaduct below. Both Lara and Zhivago, like water under snow, persist through the winter of the period, remain alive in an exceptional sense, while so many others "play" at being people, give up "the habit of thinking and judging for themselves," "idiotically pompous with each other." Lara's "greatest defeat in life" is in her marriage with Pasha, when she, too, succumbs to the general pomposity, fails to be natural with him. But in the main, both Lara and Zhivago, heroically, and with each other's help, remain free individuals — manage not to lose the "immortal part" of themselves.

The large theme of *Doctor Zhivago* is death and resurrection, and the image of the sea is a part of this. On page 12, Pasternak speaks of the freedom resulting "from the feeling that all human lives . . . flowed into each other (italics B.D.) — a happy feeling that all events took place not only on earth, in which the dead are buried, but also in some other region which some called the Kingdom of God, others history, and still others by some other name." In the passage in which Lara says farewell to Zhivago, she loses all feeling of helplessness in death's presence, musing on the fact that their joyful sense of being part of a greater whole is just what had always united her with Zhivago. She feels suddenly as if she has lived twenty lives, lost Zhivago countless times (feels their lives flow into the "general stream of life"). "Communion with others is immortal," Nikolai says. (In the final chapter, Zhivago's life and his words flow into the lives of Dudorov and Gordon — reclaiming them from the dead, from those who merely "play" at being people.) The sea, then, for Pasternak, is the sea of life — and, one could add, of immortality, "a stronger word for life."

Imagery of the sea or of water appears in a few further connections. There is, for example, the passage (page 437) in which Zhivago feels the approach of inspiration, and language itself begins to think and speak for him, its inward flow, "like the current of a mighty river polishing stones and turning wheels by its very movement," creating, in passing, me-

ter and rhythm and countless other relationships. Here again it is really the "stream of general life" that is referred to, for "at such moments Yury Andreyevich felt that the main part of the work was being done not by him but by a superior power which was above him and directed him, namely the movement of universal thought and poetry in its present historical stage and the one to come."

In his first "rash enthusiasm" about the revolution, Zhivago speaks of it in similar terms (page 146): "Everyone was revived, reborn, changed, transformed. . . . It seems to me that socialism is the sea, and all these separate streams, these private individual revolutions, are flowing into it — the sea of life, the sea of spontaneity." Later, of course, his charge against the revolutionaries is precisely that they deny to life its true quality — try to treat it as a substance that can be molded.

There is still another passage that is important to mention: the beautiful section in which Pasternak describes the thaw and the spring floods in the mountains, when all the various waters rush out with a roar and spread themselves, and rain leaps from clouds — and then four prisoners escape from the train. As Zhivago says, "They just broke free like the water" (page 238). One has the feeling that the floods have actually prompted the escape of the prisoners. Throughout the book, Pasternak notes the power of nature to communicate to human beings the impulse toward freedom, toward rebirth. (It is, for example, a sudden storm, sweeping the smell of rain into the school room where she sits, sending the papers flying about, that rouses Lara to her decision to escape from Komarovskiy—page 72.) Those who are truly alive, in Pasternak's eyes, feel themselves part of the "general stream of life" (see the poem *Dawn*: "I feel I'm melting, even as the snow melts . . .").

MRS. LEHOVICH agrees with this and points out that the name of Yury's second wife, Marina, also suggests the sea. She suggests also that the fluidity of Larisa has a specific

political aspect, which has been carefully worked out by Pasternak and which constitutes a part of his interpretation of the events of the Revolution.

The idea [Mrs. Lehovich writes] represented by the heroine Larisa is the most elusive in the whole book, although it is perhaps the one for which we are given the largest number of clues of different kinds and at different levels.

In the Russian Orthodox calendar many names are given a definite meaning. Larisa is supposed to mean *sea gull*, and this evokes two expressions frequently used in Russian: "free as a bird" and "boundless as the sea." Larisa has her own climate, a rather windy one. Her appearances are heralded by an abundance of fresh air and a feeling of spaciousness — "The flower-scented air of these open spaces . . . was dearer to her than her father and mother, better than a lover, wiser than a book." "When she entered, it was as if a window were flung open. The room filled with light and air." When Larisa is far away, a muggy, depressing atmosphere often prevails, and never more so than when freedom has fallen to its lowest ebb. There is something elemental about Larisa.

Larisa is not of Russian but Western European origin, being the daughter of a Belgian and a Frenchwoman. Throughout the book she never says anything that sounds remotely patriotic or speaks the word "Russia." With these few observations in mind, we may attempt to find out something more about Larisa by following her progress through the first part of the book. Since her appearances seem to coincide with political events, it seems necessary here to review as briefly as possible Russia's history from the autumn of 1905 to the winter of 1911.

The shock of the Russian defeats in the disastrous Russo-Japanese War was utilized by the radical parties of opposition to precipitate a revolutionary movement in Russia. This took the form of political assassinations, peasant uprisings and general strikes, notably the *railroad strike of October 20, 1905*. As a result of this, certain concessions had



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to be granted by the Tsar, including the replacement of ultra-reactionary ministers by Count Witte and the promise (*made in August 1905*) to convoke a national assembly — the Duma. On *October 30, 1905* an imperial manifesto was issued promising wide reforms and a wide extension of the franchise for the new Duma, and giving the latter considerable legislative and controlling powers. Despite the publication of this manifesto, revolutionary activities continued, culminating in the Kronstadt rebellion and the Moscow uprising (*Dec. 22, 1905 to Jan. 1, 1906*). At the same time, reactionary forces became more organized and active, utilizing the army and police for ruthless suppressions of revolutionary activities. It was in this atmosphere that the first Duma was elected. Both reactionaries and revolutionaries were discredited in public opinion. In March, 1906, the major part of the liberties granted by the manifesto of October 30 were withdrawn, and the Duma reduced to an advisory role. This arbitrary action on the part of the government was a crushing blow to all those who had hoped to see the transformation of Russia into a liberal and democratic state. In July, 1906, Stolypin, a forceful and energetic statesman, was appointed prime minister. Though his period of office was far from peaceful and was marked by harsh measures, he succeeded in restoring order, reducing revolutionary violence, and initiating a series of reforms which, had he been able to complete them, would have removed much of the ground from under the revolutionaries' feet. Stolypin was assassinated in September, 1911.

"The war with Japan was not yet over. . . . Great waves of revolution were washing over Russia" when Larisa arrives in Moscow from the Urals. The Guishars first stay at a hotel situated in the most sordid section of Moscow, then settle down in the vicinity of the Brest railroad and the houses occupied by its workers.

Larisa's next appearance is in mid-July, 1905, after a wild evening spent with Komarovsky. (In August, 1905, the Tsar discharged his reactionary ministers and promised to convoke the Duma.) In the fall, Larisa's

neighbors and friends take an active part in the railroad strike (October 20, 1905), and, on returning home a few days later, one of them, Tiverzin, hears from his mother the news of the manifesto of October 17. (This is, of course, the historic manifesto of October 30, the Russian Gregorian calendar being thirteen days behind the Julian.) In the course of that winter, Larisa is seduced by Komarovsky. "Days and weeks passed"; "Oh, what a vicious circle it was." And in history, too, there was a vicious circle of revolutionary violence and reactionary reprisals that finally brought on the Moscow insurrection of December 22. Larisa's home is right next to the barricades; her future husband Antipov is one of "the good honest boys" whom she sees mixing with the insurgents. There is a wonderful description of her at that time: "Lara walked swiftly. Some force was carrying her forward as if she were walking on air; a proud, inspiring force." Later in December, when the insurrection is dying out, Yury sees Larisa for the first time at the hotel after her mother's attempted suicide. Larisa is asleep, "she must have been deathly tired." "And that

force was now before Yury's eyes, concrete as well as vague and dream-like, mercilessly destructive and plaintive, and calling for help."

In the spring of 1906, "six months with Komarovsky overflowed the cup of Lara's patience." (Roughly six months had passed since the October 30 manifesto, both reactionaries and revolutionaries were discredited, and in March the major part of the liberties granted by the manifesto were withdrawn.) That spring Larisa "came to a decision which was to alter the course of her life for several years to come." She accepted the position of tutor to the daughter of the fabulously rich merchant and promoter, Kologrivov, whose sympathies with the revolutionary movement were so well known that he was jokingly said to "subsidize the revolution." In subsequent years, Kologrivov came several times to Larisa's assistance and gave her large sums of money and a diamond necklace for her wedding.

In Kologrivov Pasternak embodies the figures of some of Russia's millionaire merchants who, incongruously, supported the revolutionary

And So It Was

And so it was

That Achilles, wounded of mind, called to his beautiful mother.
His honor had been hurt, and she must heal it.
She did; but opened a deeper wound, the death of Patroclus;
Whence rivers of blood in which all Troy was drowned.

And so it was

That Odysseus, grizzled darling of Pallas Athene,
Triumphed over the waves; then on dry land,
His enemies. But the grey waves, still reaching, rocked him
Nightly, and robbed the old fox of his rest.

And so it was

That Hamlet, friend of angels, was elected by the fiend
To weed the bed of Denmark, and plucked up,
Before he knew it, flowers; till all was waste
And woe, and the prince of roses died himself by prick of thorn.

And so it was

That once in poor La Mancha thought grew rich,
Put forth, and filled the world; which, being full
Already, groaned aloud, fearful of surplus; and the vine,
Weary of its own leaves at last, withdrew.

And so it was

And is, and will be ever: no good man finds the going
Strange; and yet he goes; and we that watch him
Wish we too had gone where wolf and worm,
Surprising a brave soul, work out their wonders.

MARK VAN DOREN

movement. Moscow's millionaire industrialist, Sava Morozov, through his employee, the engineer Krasin, a close follower of Lenin, had been contributing two thousand roubles (\$1,000) a month to the Bolshevik faction, from early 1904 until his suicide at Cannes in 1905. (Bertram D. Wolfe, *Three Who Made a Revolution*.) Another millionaire merchant, Victor Tikhomirov, "having received his inheritance, one fine day, dropped in on Vladimir Ilyich [Lenin] to offer him one hundred thousand roubles for the purpose of founding a legal Bolshevik daily" (Wolfe).

While living at the Kologrivovs', Larisa sends money to the exiled revolutionary, Antipov, and anonymously helps his young son, Pasha, who is to become her future husband. In the summer of 1911, Larisa leaves the Kologrivovs. The falsity of her position there and her financial dependence have been weighing upon her heavily.

At a Christmas party in 1911, Larisa attempts to shoot Komarovsky, but by mistake wounds the assistant attorney general of Moscow. She lies feverish and half-conscious after the shooting. "How restless she is, how constantly she revolts and rebels in an effort to alter her destiny in her own way and to begin life anew!" Komarovsky thinks at this time. That spring Larisa makes up her mind to marry Pasha, whom, earlier in the book, she had "considered her last defense," and leaves with him for Siberia, where she is to remain for the next five years.

By an isolated act of terrorism, Russia's prime minister Stolypin was assassinated in September, 1911. The revolutionary movement, which he succeeded in suppressing, did not emerge again until 1917.

Larisa reappears in European Russia in 1917. She is a nurse in the Russian army at the time when military defeats have demoralized it and revolutionary propaganda is preparing it for the March, 1917, events. An episode at the front is described in which Larisa, Dr. Zhivago, his Jewish friend, Gordon, the little Tartar apprentice Galiullin, now an officer, and his father, the former janitor Gimazetdin, mortally wounded,

all converge at the front, at a first-aid station, but do not recognize or even encounter one another. This passage seems to make the point that the war with its hardships, by bringing together the various classes and races of the Russian nation, could have helped to promote understanding among them but that this did not occur.

Larisa's meeting with Yury at an army hospital coincides with "strange rumors from Imperial Headquarters and disquieting news from the interior." Galiullin, also a patient, reminds Larisa, a few days later, of Moscow in 1905 — "Oh, how sharply she felt it all again!"—and on that same day the news from Petersburg of the Revolution there reaches the hospital ward.

In the early days of the revolution, we see Larisa and Yury together in Melyuseyevo. Here he tries to tell her that he loves her; she shuts him off, and soon leaves for Moscow. This is just before the Bolshevik Revolution of October, 1917. She stays in Moscow a few days only, then departs once more for Siberia.

Who is Larisa, then, in the light of the political events with which the author seems to have synchronized her appearances? Much later, in Yuryatin, after Larisa has departed with Komarovsky, Yury, who has been mourning the loss of her, also "mourns that far-away summer in Melyuseyevo in the days when the revolution had been God descended on earth." Does Larisa personify the Revolution? This can hardly be possible, for in that case she would have remained in the center of events after October, 1917, and in the years that followed, when revolution swept the capital and the country, and she does not do this but withdraws and conceals herself in a remote Siberian town. This identification, also, seems too simple, and Larisa is not at all simple. The point here is probably that Larisa represents the spirit of freedom (the ideas of liberty, freedom and franchise are all contained in the Russian word *svoboda*), and that once the new system has been got under way, she prefers to be free of that, too. But Larisa's exact meaning will always escape us; she will assume different aspects as the

novel unfolds, though her image will remain constant and her direction, under changing conditions, will always remain the same.

IT SHOULD also be noted [E. W. writing] that the Larisa of the novel has obviously some connection with Pasternak's admiration for Larisa Reisner, a writer and Socialist worker of the early days of the Revolution. Here is a brief account of her career from a German anthology of Russian short stories — *Dreissig Neue Erzähler des Neuen Russland*—published in 1929:

Larisa Reisner was born in Lublin in 1895, the daughter of a professor. Her early years were spent in France and Germany, where her father had gone to study. In Western Europe he became a Socialist, and it was possible for him to return to Russia only after the 1905 revolution. At the Gymnasium Larisa wrote her first play. In 1914, after the outbreak of war, she founded, together with her father, a magazine called *Rudin*, to fight against the betrayal of international solidarity. As soon as the February revolution broke out, she began to be active in the workers' clubs, took part in the appropriation of art treasures, joined the Communist Party, and went to the front. In 1919, she was staff commissar of the Baltic fleet. In 1920 she became the wife of Raskolnikov, the Soviet envoy to Kabul. She was in Germany in 1923, soon after the Cuno strike, at the time of the Hamburg uprising. On returning to the Soviet Union, she travelled as a reporter through the great industrial regions. At the same time, she studied economics and revolutionary history, and lectured. She died of typhus in 1926.

Pasternak's poem about her—*In Memory of Reisner*—written at the time of her death, is almost an apotheosis. She is presented, like the Larisa of the novel, in association with water imagery: the floodings of spring thaw, the boilings of life in a still.

"MOREAU AND VETCHINKIN. Seeders. Threshers." This sign appears five times in *Doctor Zhivago*, when Yury either sees it or thinks of it. I was puzzled by it when I first read the book, but assumed

that it merely stood for the eternal problem of agriculture that has pressed upon the new Russia as it did upon the old. I believe that this is one of its meanings, but I recognized later that the seeders and threshers contained the death and resurrection motif. Miss Deming pointed out to me further that since the sign makes its final appearance (page 305) at the branch of the road through the forest at the time when Zhivago is unable to decide between his wife and Larisa, and just at the moment when he is about to be kidnapped by the partisans and saved from making this choice by being thrust into a life of action, the persistently recurring billboard must have some connection with the crisis. Mrs. Lehovitch reminded me that *vetchina* means ham, and that *vetchinka* is its diminutive, *hamlet*, and suggested that the sign might be somehow related to the Hamlet of the first poem of the last chapter. This Hamlet—who, in the language of Jesus in Mark 14.36, begs that his cup may pass—has been called to play a role in the drama of his age, but knows, in his solitude and darkness, that he is cast for another play, his own. For Yury it is equally impossible to escape from the Revolution or to follow the clear line of his will, which itself, between Larisa and Tonya, is balked by a bifurcation. The partisans drag him off to take part in their eager campaigning, which is entirely irrelevant to his purposes, and to preach to him their infantile bigotry, which can only exasperate and bore him. The most striking thing that met his eye on his first arrival at Yuryatin had been a great trail of smoke from “the giant illusion,” which was burning down. (This is another of Pasternak’s plays on words that do not come out in English: in the early days of the cinema, moving picture houses were sometimes called “illusions,” as shows with magicians and freaks had been. The Russian phrase here is “*illyuzion Gigant*.”) The freedom represented by Larisa is no longer, by the time he refinds her there, identified with the Revolution. And yet Yury, in his service with the partisans, will shoot, in a senseless and compulsive way, a young officer

of the Whites, just as Hamlet kills Polonius and Laertes. When at last he escapes from the partisans, and Tonya has got away to Paris, and there is no longer any obstacle to his living with Larisa, he passes by the signboard again on his way to Varykino with her, but though he looks for it, it is now too dark to see it: there is now, in the darkness of the terror from which he and Larisa are fleeing, no longer any problem of choosing. Later on, just before his death, when Evgraf has again intervened to give him an interval of freedom from his family life with Marina, and he is trying to bring some literary order into the confused materials supplied by his past, in the moments when “his imagination fail-

Paging Mr. Paterson

On this day I was born
Forty-eight years ago.
And what’s it to you? or me?

I sit in a little house.
I can see on the sun outside
Apricot blossoming white
And the pink-blossoming peach
In cold mountain air.
I have come this far, this high,
From the slow hill of birth.

I have read the morning away
With an old man’s youngest poem
Made in his seventy-fifth year —
A time when all is one —
To say that virgin and whore
Are as one, and Art is all:
The poem become at last
A vast meadow of flowers,
A brave dance of Yes.

That old man, mad for words.
I recall the day I said
“I am twelve! I am twelve! I am twelve!”
That day I knew I was twelve.
Who knows now what I am?
Or how far I have come?
But closer to this hawk-high sun.

I should like to send these trees,
White and pink over black,
To the old man, to say
“Here, these are all for you.”
And: “Neither you nor I
Are in the habit of prayer:
So will you wish me then
For the year I am seventy-five
The meadow, the measured dance.”

I watch the flowering branches.
They curve to my one desire.
They bend toward my last desire.

WINFIELD TOWNLEY SCOTT

ed and he could not get on with his work,” he would draw branching roads in his margins, with the Moreau and Vetchinkin sign, and also intersections of city streets, like the one at which he had first read the news of the success of the Bolshevik *coup d’état*, just before the first descent of Evgraf was to lead him to take the right turning.

If, bearing all this in mind, we now scrutinize the obsessive billboard, we find that in its French form the name Moreau is compounded of *mort* and *eau*, death and water, and that in its Russian form, Moro, it suggests the word *mor*, pestilence (the typhus which Yury comes down with in the winter of the Bolshevik Revolution?), which is the root of the verb *morit’*, to exterminate, starve or exhaust, as well as the word *more*, sea. With these references on his left, and on his right the seeders and threshers, Yury’s Hamlet, in great embarrassment, finds himself—“to be or not to be?”—solicited both by life and by death, which, however, like the buried seed, like the compact ambiguity of the word *Moreau*, embody a single process: the indestructible continuity of life.

THIS sign with its prism of meanings is very much in the manner of Joyce, and it seems clear that Pasternak has been influenced by *Finnegans Wake*. Zhivago, the “living man,” is simultaneously Hamlet, St. George and Jesus, just as H. C. Earwicker, “Here Comes Everybody,” is Adam, Tristram, Finnegans, etc., and he is also, just as Earwicker is split in two as the brothers Shem and Shaun, divided into the two personalities of the half-brothers, Evgraf and Yury. Larisa — the feminine principle, as is shown by what her name has in common with Marina’s — is given, like Anna Livia, the essence of the liquid element. As Anna Livia, at the end of *Finnegans Wake*, is flowing away from her household and slipping out to her father, the sea, leaving her daughter to flow in her stead, so Larisa eludes those who love her: Pasha, Yury, Komarovskiy, and leaves her daughters: one by Antipov, who is studying for the protean profession of

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actress, and one by Yury, who also seeks freedom and has been proving elusive, too.

Such a method on the part of a novelist may, of course, when detected by his commentators, give rise to a certain amount of nonsense. One can hardly, for example, accept all the conjectures of Mr. Mikhail Koryakov, the author of the article quoted earlier on the relations between Pasternak and Stalin. Mr. Koryakov, in another article, in the *Novoe Russkoe Slovo* of February 8, has tried to show that Yury's competence as an oculist — which is never, as Mr. Koryakov notes, mentioned after his graduation from medical school—is picked up toward the end of the book when Zhivago, on being told by Dudorov, who has served a term in jail, that he feels he is a better man for the brain-washing given him by the magistrate, has the melancholy impression of listening to a horse who is telling about breaking himself in. The breaking-in of a horse, Mr. Koryakov points out, implies the use of blinders, the partial suppression of the use of the eye, and he manages, by an argument I shall not trace, to discover in these two widely separated passages a "polemic with Mayakovsky."

Yet parallels and symbols do exist in *Zhivago*. They are deliberate and very important: the whole story is organized around them, they lie at the center of the meaning of the book, and once we have become aware of them, we see it compose as a harmony. Certain critics who have made the objection that *Zhivago* is a social novel, conceived in an antiquated mode and not very well contrived, have completely missed the spirit and the shape of the book. These critics have been misled, I believe, by the English and American translations, which — partly, perhaps, inevitably, partly unnecessarily — have eliminated so much of the poetry and ignored the significant emphases. *Doctor Zhivago* is not at all old-fashioned: in spite of some echoes of the Tolstoyan tone in certain of the military scenes, there is no point in comparing it with *War and Peace*. It is a modern poetic novel by a writer who has read

Joyce, Proust and Kafka, and who, like Virginia Woolf or the Lawrence Durrell of the Alexandria series, has gone on from his predecessors to invent in this genre a variation of his own. We may early in our reading of the book come to see that the most salient incidents are intended to stand for something — as in the case of the masterly episode of the journey in the train with the deaf-mute, who figures the insulation from reality of a certain type of *exalté* in the first phase of the Revolution. But we may still be disposed to wonder, at the beginning of one of the divisions of a chapter, why the author has chosen to describe at such length some aspect of the weather or the landscape or to concentrate upon some scene involving a set of characters to whom we have not yet been introduced and whom we do not expect to meet again. I am puzzled still by some of these passages. Why, for example, at the beginning of "The Highway," do we spend so much time in the merchant's house in the little Siberian village? That this opening has some special significance is shown by the fact that it is saturated, in a very Joycean way — I was quite unaware of this till Mrs. Lehovich called my attention to it — with ecclesiastical references: words, objects, colors and sounds. (It is Holy Week, to be sure: death and resurrection again.) But in most cases it soon becomes clear that the apparently random description or scene is a metaphor for some moment of history, some facet of the social situation, some state of mind of the characters, which forms the real subject of the section. And so, we come finally to realize, the whole book is an enormous metaphor for the author's vision of life. The personalities of Yury and Larisa stream back into wider reaches, a realm in which their contours and features are lost, in which they become indefinable, unclassifiable poetic elements that can only be conveyed by imagery; and it is not only the imagery material of these metaphors but their rhythms of recurrence, their alienations, their confluences and interfusions that express the real sense of *Zhivago*.

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STANFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS
Stanford, California

April 25, 1959

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Who Is We?

George P. Elliott

WHAT WITH the tendency-spotters employed all over the country nowadays, you'd think not much of anything could have passed without being commented, marketized, or at least Ph.D.'ed. But, in the last two and a half years during which I have lived in Manhattan, I have become conscious of a tend which has thus far gone unexplored. Now unfortunately I can't tell a mean from a median, so I won't try to be very sociological in describing it. It is something like this:

Present-day Americans are engaged in a regular tidal wave of a movement to keep on doing what they're doing and not to be *we* — that is, not to contribute intellectual articles to *Partisan Review*, etc., not to be New Yorkers either by birth or adoption, not to be connected with Columbia (or with NYU, CCNY, New School, Hunter, Fordham, Brooklyn, Queens, Union Theological, Jewish Theological, or The Juilliard School of Music).

Once I became aware of this movement, all sorts of odd little facts which for several years had been pestering me off and on suddenly fell into place. Mostly, my perplexity had turned about who the *we* was that I kept reading about in the literary and pensive magazines. I was a provincial and knew it: from a farm and small town in Indiana, to the desert and a middling city in Southern California, to Berkeley and the San Francisco area, to Ithaca, N.Y.; educated in Riverside Junior College and the University of California; had never written an intellectual article in my life. Still and all, I knew quite a few intelligent and cosmopolitan people, and these did not always seem to fit into the *we* that emanated from New York City, especially from Morningside Heights (where Columbia University is located) and The Village.

Some examples:

Diana Trilling (wife of Lionel, resident of Morningside Heights, long a contributor to *we* journals): "Delighted by both [*Wee Geordie* and *Anastasia*], I was suddenly reminded of how much has gone out of life since one stopped going to the movies regularly, as an anodyne, as an escape, as a compulsion, as anything so long as one went. . . . In our present view of life people who think of themselves as 'serious' or 'ma-

ture' no longer admit a need for this kind of refuge." (*New Leader*, May 6, 1957.) Well, if she had changed *since one stopped to since I stopped*, and in *our present view of life to at my age*, then what she says would be obviously the case and I'm with her. But as written, I can only say I know a fellow in Kansas, a couple in Ithaca, and quite a few in California who think of themselves as no longer kids, but who go to movies as regularly and compulsively as Mrs. Trilling ever did (also a couple in New York City).

Eric Bentley (Professor of English at Columbia, lives down Riverside Drive a ways, all over the journals): "A play in which we are told that a married couple haven't slept together in six months should make much clearer to us the sexual constitution of all the leading characters. It seems that the husband [in *Third Person*] has had intercourse with no one for six months; Kip for a matter of years. The only thing that would make these facts credible is explanation; and none is provided." (*New Republic*, Jan. 16, 1956.) I thought such a view was amusing when I came across it in Aristotle — who posited complete continence as conceivable but not to be found in nature — but after two millennia of Christianity, after Puritanism, in a country with 35,000,000 Catholics, in an age of anxiety, I found this view simply astonishing. Dotted around in the provinces. . . .

Louis Simpson (teaches at Columbia, Morningside Heights, poet): "To his contemporaries, and to men and women of succeeding generations, it seemed important whether Byron had an incestuous affair. . . . It does not seem so to us." (*The Hudson Review*, Autumn 1958). Now that, if I may quote The President when asked what he thought of the youth of America, is really something. O you of West Virginia, Wichita, Walla Walla, is not your reaction to a man seriously altered when you know he is practicing incest? And your sister, your brother? Doesn't it seem just a little important to you?

Mary McCarthy (in and around New York City for twenty-five years, real *we*) wrote in *Commentary* for September 1947 that, when a lady existentialist from France was visiting some of *we* and asked to be taken to a typical American restaurant for dinner, Miss McCarthy *et al* were unable to think of a single decent one in all of New

York. That rocked me back on my Middle West Coast heels; besides, since I've come here I discover that even in Manhattan there are steak joints, sea food houses, and other such indigenes, and I am ready to give out the address of a typical American restaurant on West 57th to anyone who sends in a self-addressed stamped envelope. Anyhow, Miss McCarthy used this astonishing ignorance of hers to take off on how *we* don't have anything she could call her own.

One of the *Partisans* once wrote that nobody who had not been a Communist and then left the Party could pretend to understand modern America. Boy, did I ever feel left out of the swim! I was never even a Schachtmanite.

NOW you've got to take your hat off to the *we* 107 (that's my count). By a strange coöptation they form a club from which provincials east, west, north and south feel excluded; but there are other clubs even more exclusive. What's special about *we* is that its members sometimes mistake the customs of the club for the mores of the commonwealth; which is mere egotism. But what irks me is that they then try to put themselves over on all the rest of the country as spotters of truth, fountains of tend, pontiffs.

And it seems to me troubling that any young intellectual has practically got to listen to them. For a couple of reasons, one good and the other not so good.

The good reason to listen is that they are not only very intelligent but also American: i.e., when they feel each other's pulse, what they learn has nothing to do with Kenya or Iceland. To be sure, it's not the pulse of America (if there is such a creature) that they are feeling, any more than the hidden-motivation-persuader-research boys are feeling it, any more than 107 Boston typists or Southern Baptist preachers or Eskimos working in Alaska fish canneries would, feeling one another's pulse, feel it. Still, what they feel has *something* to do with America. A lot of their generalizations are true, a lot of their insights valid. An axiom to be held firmly in mind: The area east of the Hudson, north of Staten Island, west of Canarsie, and south of the Bronx Zoo is indeed part of the United States, is at least as American as the Cajun swamp district of Louisiana.

Also, the actual 107 don't seem all that different from ordinary people, at a party, say, or on a podium; at least not the ones I've met and seen. One of them, whose merest literary grumble ten or fifteen years ago made

GEORGE P. ELLIOTT is the author of *Parktilden Village*.

me tremble, turns out to be a heavy-set fellow who likes to get you in a corner at a party and lay down the law on international politics — like a Republican rancher I knew when I was a kid, up the road from my family on the Carob Plantation. Another wears a bush of a beard and drives snazzy sports cars. And I live on the same block now as Pontifex Maximus himself, born and raised in New York, went to Columbia in the 20s and has taught there since 1931, and to see him walking up the sidewalk with a paper sack in his hand (containing a pound of hamburger?) you wouldn't think he was one of *we* at all, but a neighbor.

Which just goes to show.

The not-so-good reason to listen to them is that these are the Diors and Schiaparellis of intellectual fashion design. What they think today, you're apt to find yourself, in a Sears-Roebuckish way, sort of thinking tomorrow. Like the dress-men, once in a while they hit on something first-rate. For example, they set me onto Kafka, for which service I have not ceased to be grateful; also, among others, Orwell, Nathanael West, Koestler, Auerbach, Bellow. But a good deal of the time the stuff they turn out is most unappealing. Especially, yawn-making symposia — on nerve-failure, essential existentialism, the treason of clerks, the alienation of The Writer in the postwar world, the role of . . .

There is, alas, another reason which is no good at all: New York is the chief source of power — i.e., reputation, publishing, money — and *we* are in on the ground floor. Advices to up-and-coming young intellectuals: Get yourself born in New York City and if you're a woman be chic; in any case, wherever you're from, even if you're dowdy and Michigan, attend Columbia and get yourself invited to certain parties. There are careers languishing in Ann Arbor to this very day for lack of . . .

I MET a mustached young *we* at a party. Pleasant fellow. If he'd come from Peoria and gone to the University of Illinois and been teaching at Utah, he'd probably never have had this grisly idea: What this country needs (he said) is an intellectual capital, what London is to England and Paris to France; power is pretty well concentrated in New York, but intelligence is diffused and dissipated all over, mostly in the universities; *we* need one central city, Manhattan to wit, where the best minds could gather, receive and winnow the up-and-comers, and see to it that only the best is thought, said and

printed. The very notion makes my teeth rattle (I'm not too suave yet), my legs twitch and my eyeballs roll back in their sockets till all I can see is my own thoughts clicking around in my brain. Moderation, fellows, moderation! Haven't you got enough of the stuff already? What about Corpus Christi? Have mercy on Iowa City! Hartford! Milledgeville! Salome-Where-She-Danced!

Not, really, that New York (by which I understand Manhattan between 125th and Houston Streets, and maybe Brooklyn Heights) is in itself so pernicious. It has its archaisms; I've seen a chain-drive truck from the 20s with solid rubber tires, and once in Times Square I saw a mothy old mare pulling a wagon with four wobbly wheels of different sizes. It has millions of unassimilated and half-assimilated and ill-assimilated immigrants. It has several thousand more intelligent, good-looking and aggressively available women than equivalent, heterosexual men; here, if two are lovers, it is said of them blandly that they "are going together" or even "are seeing a lot of each other." It has cockroaches, even in Park Avenue apartments. It has, as someone or other must have noted somewhere, noise, museums, theatres, filthy air, Madison Avenue, a murder a day and too damned many people. All of which, and a multitude of ingredients in addition, com-

pose a special and quite wonderful city but do not go very far to account for *we*.

If power were concentrated in St. Louis and if a good many of the right people had gone to Washington University, then *we* would be different in some superficial ways but would remain essentially the same. Mostly, as I believe, the 107 have spent their time reading books, talking to one another and churning up theories, which is an amiable way to get along and by no means censurable; but because they are in fact very intelligent and in fact quite powerful, they fall into the error of believing (like a popular professor who begins to think all the world's a classroom) that they know far more than they do and that their theories, being much listened to and repeated, are pretty significant. *We* live in a world of *we*.

So, you say of me, the trouble with this guy is he's envious.

It's true. How can I deny it? I go pea-green every time I think about how courageous *we* can be. You know, it takes nerve to speak even for the people whom you know well; when I do it, I'm apt to get my head snapped off; maybe I have rough friends. But *we* have courage of a much more exalted variety; *we* dare to use spokesmanship on all American intellectuals, an astonishing number of whom they've never

My Love Lies Down Tonight

(for Doran)

My love lies down tonight in an unknown country,
long limbs on a lonely bed. I, who would solve
all mysteries in her, all life, but may not
share even the bitten lip nor stir in darkness,
send her my loves, limb-love and deep heart's love,
in that dark country where she lies tonight.

What could I wish for, but to watch her move
in a darkened room in white moonlight,
naked and ready to join in our naked world,
our thin-skinned world of ephemeral, tenuous joy;
to leave as our bodies can all lamentation
for the momentary amnesia of loving.

In the long shells of the empty nights I see her,
a shimmer of water in the deserts of my dreams,
something beyond all hope, beyond all grieving.
I would have us shrive each other of all our crimes,
two thieves forgiven by the Christ of our love;
and wish that our long moment of lying there

could be to us forever, that she could love me
in that brief moment more than all the world
of dancers and merrymakers precise and charmed
with dazzle of daylight, in single darkness curled.
Take away, my eyes, if you can, the light of morning,
and let us lie together in night without end.

CHARLES DOYLE

April 25, 1959

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even shaken hands with, and sometimes for such vasty things as *The American Woman* or even America itself, just like *Life Time Fortune*.

ALL THIS helps account, as I believe, for their astonishing reaction to *Witness* by Whittaker Chambers (from a town east of Brooklyn, went to Columbia, around New York off and on for twenty years, a friend of some *we*). The word on *Witness* was first proclaimed on the cover of *The Saturday Evening Post* for February 9, 1952, the issue in which the first of ten excerpts was published: "One of the Great Books of Our Time." *We* agreed, though adding that the book and/or the author was very imperfect. "As a confession, it has an almost classic structure." (Irving Howe, *The Nation*, May 24, 1952.) "He has looked into himself more deeply and more truly than any man of our times, except for a handful of great creative writers, and he has set down, without shrinking, what he has seen." (Granville Hicks, *New Leader*, May 26, 1952.)

Sidney Hook (philosophy professor at NYU) wrote in *The New York Times* for May 25, 1952, when the century had a bit over forty-seven years and seven months yet to run: "The name of the author, the theme of his work, the nature of our times all conspire to make this volume one of the most significant autobiographies of the twentieth century. It is not among the 100 great books. Yet it throws more light on the conspiratorial and religious character of modern communism . . . than all of the 100 great books of the past combined." Mr. Hook should be interested in a book entitled *Photography Directory and Buying Guide* for 1956. It isn't one of the 100 great books either, yet it throws more light than all of them combined on densitometers in our society, in our time.

The most complicated view was that taken by Philip Rahv (*Partisan Review*, July-August 1954). His general thesis, and the one still more or less current, is that Chambers was very Dostoevskyeen — behaved that way, probably conceived of himself that way, wrote a book which would be even better if it were more Dostoevskyeen.

All right, assume that Chambers has lived a life, and is, like one of the more fascinating characters in Dostoevsky. Still, a confession, being a form of literature, is judged much less upon the facts of the author's life and personality than upon his rendering of them. Raskolnikov's own version of his crime and punishment would be unimaginably confusing, deceiving and revolting. Dosto-

evsky's version of Chambers' story could conceivably have been quite wonderful. What *Witness* actually provides is the story of a sort of Raskolnikov—a literate, tormented, theory-stuffed sinner seeking at once to exculpate and to debase-aggrandize himself—who is trying to render his own story as he imagines Dostoevsky might have rendered it. The result, visible to any reader who wishes to look and who believes that the style has some intimate connection with the man, is mish-mash, pretentiousness and self-pollution. (Similarly, Hiss's book, *In the Court of Public Opinion*, is so dry that it crumbles to dust in the mind, whichever side you're on.)

But *we* took *Witness* more or less at its face value and took Chambers as having played, vaguely, a sort of Rubashov to Nixon's Gletkin; and for a while there was quite a spate of *we* breast-beating over the sins of their radical youth—rather pastel sins next to Chambers', but the best they had to offer.

Suppose an autobiography written by a Wobbly from Idaho, published by the Free Press in Glencoe, Ill., and selling in the lower hundreds, I doubt that these ladies and gentlemen, who are of some considerable literary acumen, would have found anything classic in it if it glistened with bombazine prose like this (from "A Letter to My Children," first elocuted over TV and printed in *The Saturday Evening Post*, then prefaced to *Witness*, published by Random House and a selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club): "It was my fate to be a witness to each of the two great faiths of our time. And so we come to the terrible word, Communism. My very dear children, nothing in all these pages will be written so much for you, though it is so unlike anything you would want to read. In nothing shall I be so much a witness, in no way am I so much called upon to fulfill my task, as in trying to make clear to you (and to the world) the true nature of Communism and the source of its power, which was the cause of my ordeal as a man, and remains the historic ordeal of the world in the twentieth century." What a difference it would have made if Chambers the author had recognized the immodesty of Chambers the character, as Dostoevsky recognized that of Raskolnikov.

I AM HAPPY to hasten to report that there are lots of New Yorkers and a good many writers of articles for the proper magazines who are decidedly non-*we*; furthermore, I have colleagues on the faculty of Barnard College (which is the girls' part of Columbia University)

few of whom show any of the above-described symptoms.

Nor is there a codex of doctrine or custom every item of which a *we* must swear allegiance to. There are Anglo-Catholics, believing Jews and those who are just stuck with it, Roman Catholics born, converted, apostate and wobbling, ecumenical Protestants who go to church and Lutherans who don't, agnostics, staunch atheists, and would-be Zens. There was a great and famous falling out over whether to award Ezra Pound a prize for his poetry despite his politics. Many have voted for Roosevelt, others for Eisenhower, some for Darling-ton Hoops. And I have heard some say they think it *infra dig* for Dean Jacques Barzun to have taken up selling Victor phonograph records.

But the heart of the matter, as I conceive it, is an attitude, a disposition: that whatever one experiences has been experienced by many or all, at any rate by the right few; that the theories one had made up are commonly accepted as right opinion or are facts of common knowledge; that things tend to be getting worse than they used to be; that whatever one says with sufficient pomp should be attended to.

Take for example the *we*-most of all, one who tends to be a tendency to and of himself, from New Jersey, NYU and the University of Wisconsin to Missoula via *Partisan Review*—Leslie Fiedler.

He has developed to perfection an in-group tone which appeals very potently to outsiders who like the illusion they are being let in. He is especially fond of telling his betters what their *real* (i.e., nastiest) motives are, and his attitude of superiority, often of indulgence, applies to everyone he discusses, even to those he is trying to praise. He uses it even on Simone Weil, who transmits dignity to all she touches; the best essay of Mr. Fiedler's that I have read is his introduction to *Waiting for God*; yet in it he manages to snuggle even her into the cozy circle—"our kind of saint." He all the time finds archetypes and symbols where you least expect them: "the bum as American culture hero"; "the young Jew as writer and thinker is the very symbol of our urbanization (as also our ambivalent relationship to Europe, the atomization of our culture, and our joyful desperation)." You there, William Faulkner, Father Merton, Admiral Rickover, is the young Jew as writer and thinker your very symbol? Is your desperation joyful?

And Mr. Fiedler is a master at conning you with of courses: "Hiss, who really knew Chambers, of course, better than anyone else except Chambers'

wife. . . ." But he seems to get his biggest charge from rootling under logs, that is to say, from discovering that the apparently innocent are really corrupt and especially finding evidence of lurking homosexuality.

I remember how I was affected by his essay "Come Back to the Raft Ag'in, Huck Honey!" (The title, which well serves its function in assisting to innuendo his case, seems to be from Mark Twain but is from L. Fiedler.) After I read it, I shriveled and shuddered, and was embarrassed to shake hands with my closest friend. The worst part was the passage he quoted from *Moby Dick*:

"I found Queequeg's arm thrown over me in the most loving and affectionate manner. You had almost thought I had been his wife . . . he still hugged me tightly, as though naught but death should part us twain. . . . Thus, then, in our heart's honeymoon, lay I and Queequeg—a cosy, loving pair . . . he pressed his forehead against mine, clasped me around the waist, and said that henceforth we were married."

In Melville, the ambiguous relationship is most explicitly rendered; almost, indeed, openly explained. Not by a chance phrase or camouflaged symbol (the dressing of Jim in a woman's gown in *Huck Finn*, for instance, which can mean anything or nothing at all), but in a step-by-step exposition, the Pure Marriage of Ishmael and Queequeg is set before us.

Well, I can tell you, for a few weeks there I repressed every impulse to punch my friend in *apparently* innocent affection and blushed every time we bumped shoulders while walking on the sidewalk (for it too could mean anything or nothing at all—no?).

But then, what the hell. I remembered another friend, an abysmally non-*we* next-door neighbor, with whom I had spent a sort of Queequeg night seven or eight years before, and I decided to revert to bumping along and shaking hands come what may.

Call him Smitty. He was a rigger, construction worker, lumberjack, bootlegger, truck driver; he was rebuilding the rotten foundations of the house he had bought; he was working, at the time of my story, as a fisherman in a crew of five, hunting sharks for their valuable livers. One day he needed someone to drive him and his gear down to the fishing boat in a town 250 miles south of San Francisco, and then bring his car back the next day; it's a beautiful drive; the weather was good; I was free; I went. We had plenty of beer along the way and plenty more after

we got there; then, when we looked for a place to stay, we could find only one vacant room in town, in a ratty old motel. There was one broken-sprung, swag-bellied double bed, into which we piled, being by then pretty beat (Old Style). It was uphill sleeping all night long. Smitty flopped on his back in the middle of the bed and began snoring as I'd never heard a man snore. I ascended my side of the mattress and presently fell asleep. Sometime in the night, I woke up; I was snuggling him because he'd pulled the covers off me and I was cold; I reclaimed my share of the covers, climbed the mattress again, and went to sleep. Then, later, I woke up to find him wrapping himself around me; I punched him in the ribs with my elbow; he grunted and rolled back. As I was about to drop off again he threw his arm over my leg. "Mary," he grumbled (Mary was his wife), "why are your legs so hairy?" So I punched him again and we slept till 7:30.

Really and truly, the friendship of Queequeg and Ishmael was not of prime importance in *Moby Dick* nor, if I may analogize from my friendship with Smitty, was the homosexual ingredient in that friendship very important. What was important was their love; and that they should have sealed their love, on that strange ship, by a version of the ceremony which seals the fullest kind of human love, marriage, seems to me moving and splendid. I hope I may never lose the innocence, if innocence it is, which believes that of love there cannot be too much, that love deserves respect, that love may have power to redeem its own impurities.

There was the germ of a good enough idea in Mr. Fiedler's essay, one worth mentioning in passing, with a flick of the wrist, while talking about something more important. But it is possible that Melville wasn't so innocent. It is just possible that of the plausible antonyms to innocent—*guilty*, of course, and *corrupt* too, but also *experienced* and *wise*—that of these, *corrupt* was not highest on Melville's list.

Mr. Fiedler's thesis is one to which not all, perhaps not many, of *we* subscribe; but his tone, the you-and-me-and-maybe-not-even-you tone—that is *we* pluperfect.

ALLEN GINSBERG (Jersey, Columbia, beat, New Style): "I saw the best minds of my generation . . ." (the first words of *Howl*). No, Mr. G., you didn't either. Maybe you saw the best minds of your class in college, though I'd be willing to bet that a couple of best-mind physicists slipped by without you

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NEW DIRECTIONS

noticing. But I have a friend born in Germany, now in Columbus, whom you never saw; he's got five or six years on you but still he's of your generation; and he has a dandy mind. Never had an "angry fix"; owns his own car; married; washing machine; neither cornholes nor is cornholed unto; does not howl that his abundant troubles are the fault of communism, commercialism, the way America does not appreciate him, Hitler, General Motors, or the Statue of Liberty.

So, you say to me, Mr. G. wasn't running a Gallup Poll. He was having a vision.

A damned pompous vision, I say, with a lie in it.

So, you say to me, how do you know your Columbus friend is one of the best minds even of Ohio State? How come you know so much? Have you made a survey? Got an inside track?

It's true. I give up. I don't know, and that's a fact. . . .

My trouble is, I take the coward's way out, the easy way, as against taking the broader view, being significant and spokesmanlike. Still, it's no worse than saying nothing or repeating what *we* tell me to.

O PERSON sitting in darkness! In Scottsville, Minneapolis, Athens, Inter-course, Waukesha, Mendocino City, R.F.D.! My double! my brother! Don't let the *we*-ones wear you down!

If the inflated way is not for you, try a lesser one; try figuring out just what you yourself honestly think; try speaking only for yourself, discovering what you actually experience and believe, and saying it as well as you can. Doing this deflates the balloon-type ego, no doubt of that. But those who set about trying to know themselves, to speak only for themselves, find that it's not so easy as it seems.

Rather, that's what I find.

had not even been known to exist. What he learned was that industrial statistics were deceptive. Every factory was different. Each had its own history, identity, meaning. From a painstaking study of them, one by one, new patterns appeared, outside the economic dogmas of the time.

At the start he ran into a typical mystery. The second factory in America was the Falling Creek Iron Works in Virginia. In 1620, 150 ironworkers were sent from England; three died in 1621, and Captain Berkeley and twenty Sussex reinforcements were despatched to speed the venture. The plant was immense for the time; for that matter, it was big even by our present standards. Only about 15,000 American plants now have that many employees. In the spring of 1622 Berkeley reported the works completed and that he would ship the first cargo in May.

In the great massacre of Virginia colonists at that time the works were destroyed and the workers killed to the last man. The only survivors at Falling Creek were a little girl and boy who hid in the bushes. In all, 347 Virginia settlers were slaughtered, a mysterious onslaught because the Indians had long been peaceful. Half the total casualties were the ironworkers. Much dispute prevailed — and still prevails — as to the date of the massacre. Four of our contemporary histories give four different dates. One places the massacre on February 1, another in March, a third on March 24, another on May 22. Bishop said the Falling Creek Works were destroyed at the same time that a mob in England destroyed the first ironworks in England to use coal instead of wood for fuel. The exhaustion of English supplies of timber (which Bishop found had been rationed since 1581) led Dud Dudley, an illegitimate son of Lord Dudley, to build an experimental works using coal. He patented the process in 1621, and the works were operating successfully when a mob, supposedly of displaced wood-splitters, destroyed it. Dr. Bishop did not say that the simultaneous destruction of these two historic works indicated a pre-arranged plan; he merely noted that no further attempt was made to use coal in iron production for another century, and that iron-making in Virginia was not resumed until 1712.

WHAT early begins to emerge from Dr. Bishop's history is a native American pattern of industry, different in kind from the industrialism of Europe. Industry in the Old World was regarded with hostility from the start, entangled with feudal remnants and the trade

America's Unknown History

Robert Cantwell

JAMES LEANDER BISHOP was a 36-year-old physician living on Front Street in Philadelphia in 1856, when he was commissioned to write a historical guide to American manufacturing. How it came about that a doctor, and apparently a pretty good one, was charged with a task of this nature is not made clear in the brief accounts that exist of Bishop's life. There was a tradition of Philadelphia medical men engaging in literature, and Bishop was widely read and had a good, plain, factual prose style. Whatever the circumstances that led him to give up medicine for writing, he prepared the only genuine industrial history in our literature, the source book on which economic interpretations of the American past depend.

Bishop was hired by a brilliant, enterprising, none-too-scrupulous editor named Edwin Troxell Freedley. This Freedley was the son of a Pennsylvania Congressman. He had studied law at Harvard, and at twenty-five, in 1852, turned out the most useful of do-it-yourself books, simply entitled *Money: How to Get It*. Not unnaturally, the book became an immediate sensation in this country and England. The editor of *The Economist* in London, where Freedley visited, wrote smugly that Freedley's

Money had given him a far higher estimation of Americans than he had previously entertained. All copies of the book seem to have disappeared, no doubt locked up in the family archives of the founders of great fortunes. Freedley became a publisher of do-it-yourself legal guides, and volumes telling where to make money around Philadelphia.

He didn't want the sort of book Bishop wrote. He wanted a quick hack job, a breezy run-through of the early industrial history of the country, culminating in the fine flourishing outlook that stretched before us in 1860. He wanted it to lead up to the living manufacturers, whose whiskery portraits would be included by a new process of steel engraving. But Bishop turned out to be a genius. He conceived his job as requiring him to trace the history of literally every factory that had ever operated in the nation or the preceding colonies. He began with the first glass works in Jamestown in 1608, and carried the story through the building of Horace Abbott's rolling mill in Baltimore, completed just in time to roll the plates for the *Monitor*. Bishop's *History of American Manufacturers from 1608 to 1860* runs to 1,504 pages, about a million words of text in which few words are wasted. From local histories, old newspapers, letters, journals, legislative records, he pieced together the stories of perhaps 5,000 factories, most of which

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secrets of guilds and artisans, forever haunted by shortages of raw materials and obsessed by notions of their transatlantic abundance, perpetually wary of the encroachment of the sovereign state, or of the sovereign himself, and haunted by the ease with which the mob could be set in motion by the landed aristocracy against such factories as managed to survive.

As he traced the growth of American factories, it became apparent to Dr. Bishop that the European intellect had never been able to grasp the accomplishment or the potential of American industry. Almost from the start these plants became one of the dynamic forces of world history, shattering the preconceptions of economists whose body of knowledge stemmed from other conditions. English theoreticians were still trying to force Virginia planters to raise silk, because the climate was similar to that of Persia, while North America was in fact becoming a major industrial power before it was known to possess any industry at all. Dr. Bishop located and named eighty-two shipyards that were functioning in the earliest colonial days. In a single year, 1676, 730 vessels were built along the coast near Boston; within another decade New England had become the greatest fish-producing center the world had ever known; after 1690, when whale-fishing began on a large scale in the region, its pre-eminence increased.

SHIP-BUILDING on this scale, with limited manpower, required power sawmills, and as early as 1634 Andrew Gibbon was operating one at Salmon River Falls in New Hampshire, fifty years before the royal prohibition against power sawmills was removed in England. After 1639 they were commonplace in the Dutch and Swedish settlements; after 1654, when John Winthrop built the first in New London, Dr. Bishop was able to locate one started almost every year, some twenty-four in Maine alone as early as 1682, and around 400 in all in Dr. Bishop's catalogue. Sawmills and lumber required saws and axes, and after the creation of the Saugus Iron Works in Lynn, Massachusetts, in 1641, forges and furnaces multiplied with incredible rapidity, their founders trained in the Saugus Works where, in 1646, Joseph Jenckes, the first great American mechanic, invented the American scythe, without which the country could not have been cleared. By 1745, despite a royal prohibition against the building of iron works in America, these works were producing one-seventieth of the world's iron. Fifty

years later America was producing one-seventh of the world's iron.

Bishop came to believe that the ancient fraternities that arose in Europe with a decay of feudalism, limiting trade or industry to their own members, crippled industrial development with a permanent injury, not only in the physical sense of stifling development but in the habits of thought they bred. "The scarcity of labor, and its better remuneration in this country," he wrote, "and perhaps a more general appreciation of the value of labor-saving devices, have for the most part prevented any hostility to such improvements." Massachusetts abolished all such monopolies in 1641, except for new inventions, like that of Jenckes, granted for brief periods. The salient difference was that in America industry was welcomed from the start; every factory was a treasure to be guarded; the loss of one by Indian raid or fire or, more often, by that perpetual villain, the disgruntled ex-employee, was a community disaster.

The outlines of an epic began to emerge from the physician's findings: the story of the sawyer in Joseph Wing's sawmill in Worcester, kidnapped to Canada by Indians and forced to build a sawmill in return for his son's freedom; William Hutchinson's Berwick mill, as-

saulted by French-led Indians in 1690, with the loss of eighty-four of its crew; the gunshop of Hugh Orr, the first to manufacture muskets, visited by settlers from all over the colonies, who brought to Orr specimens of every mineral discovered; the nail factory of Jacob Perkins, cutting 200,000 nails a day; the Ames Shovel Works, whose products were found to be better than the best imported shovels; the marvelous wire mill of Amos Whittemore, the most ingenious of New England blacksmiths; the textile mill that Samuel Slater built in Rhode Island, largely with his own hands, in 366 days, from plans he carried in his head when he fled from England; the works of Oliver Evans, the finest mechanic of them all.

"The services of artisans, however humble," Dr. Bishop wrote, "who have acted as pioneers in any branch of the useful arts, we regard as fit subjects to record in connection with the rise of American industry." What he emerged with was a great gallery of noble mechanics — not only Jenckes, Evans and Eli Whitney, but hundreds like them of lesser stature: Richard Leader, the first superintendent of the Saugus Works; John Deacon, the first American blacksmith; John Peck, the first native ship designer; Ezekiel Reed,

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Joseph Holmes, Jesse Murdoch, Peter Townsend, David Jones, Whitehead Humphreys, Josiah Hornblower — an amazing assemblage, all the more remarkable, in their integrity, kindness and foresight, when one thinks of the portraits of the robber barons in the next period of American literature, or of such business figures as Dickens' Scrooge, the English prototype of the businessman in Dr. Bishop's own era.

His history is a latent masterpiece also in a kind of half-poetry with which it enhances familiar objects: axes and shovels, kettles, stoves, salt, soap, glass, fishhooks, nails, bolts, locks, pipes, wallpaper, pins, needles, or the superb gun stocks made of wild cherry at Vander Poel's mill on Beaver Creek near Albany. There is a real poetry in the commercial and place names: the Hard Bargain Furnace, Third Herring Brook, Shovel

Shop Pond, Safe Harbor Iron Works, Forest of Deane Mine, Furnace Village, Damascus Iron Works, Spruce Swamp Mine, Rough and Ready Rolling Mills.

BISHOP was not able to complete his work. At the start of the Civil War, despite its unfinished state, Freedley decided to bring out one volume in the hope that manufacturers would cooperate in gathering material for the second. Not only is the work as a whole incomplete, but each section seems unfinished, Dr. Bishop being obviously too pleased at having discovered any fact about a forgotten factory to bother with refinements of editing and revision. The book was badly printed, the type small and tiring. Bishop enlisted in the 35th Pennsylvania Regiment, soon was promoted surgeon of the 36th. These regiments saw heroic duty at Manassas,

Gaines Mill, Antietam and Fredricksburg; during the advance on Gettysburg, the 36th was entrusted with guard duty at Washington. Returning to the field, it was wiped out in the Wilderness. After seven months in Andersonville, Bishop was freed by Sherman, and discharged in 1864. He died in 1868.

No attempt has been made to carry on his work; there is no American industrial history, any more than there was a history of the American wilderness until Francis Parkman traced it in the cycle of books that occupied him for forty years. Bishop accomplished wonders in four or five years; as a result of his work, our industrial history is pretty thoroughly known up to the Civil War; after that, it is hardly known at all. A dozen general surveys of American manufacturing are in use — the works of Albert Bolles (1881), Katherine Comans (1905), Carroll Wright (1911), Walter Jennings (1926), Victor Clark (1929) and Arthur Bining (1943). They derive largely from Bishop for the early years; for the later period, they discuss, not factories, but general trends, the growth of monopolies and the emergence of labor organizations and federal controls. Documentation of factories as Bishop carried it through does not exist. In her *Guide to Business History* published by Harvard University Press ten years ago Henrietta Larson observed guardedly that "the history of American manufacturing is still to be written. . . ."

One result is that the United States, which for generations has been telling itself that it is the greatest industrial power on earth, really knows nothing of its industrial past since 1860. There is no standard reference work on manufacturing as exact as Spaulding's *Baseball Guide*. There is no source telling what was manufactured where, by whom, anywhere in the country. And, as a natural consequence, no imaginative literature has been laid against the background of the dominant force in our history. Portraits of sea captains abound in New England fiction, but I know of only one portrait of an early manufacturer, Elizabeth Stoddard's sensitive characterization of Charles Morgeson in *The Morgesons*, published in 1865. This is a sort of air pocket, an empty space, in our literature — the creations we have fail to account for the shape life has taken on this continent. Industrialists like Dreiser's Titan could not have accounted for what has been done, nor industrial establishments like those of Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* produced what has been produced.

The Self and the Weather

It is tiresome always to talk about weather, or think about it.

We ought to be able to rise (always rise) above it

By dedication

To our jobs, wives, children, even our art. Thus this poem,

If it is a poem,

Ought (always ought)

Not to be written.

If I must lie

On this rumpled bed with my clipboard and pencil

And moodily stare out windows at wet leaves,

Wet grass, wet laundry and so on, hearing the thunder

Rattle, and thinking that last night the weatherman said that

Today (!) (irony)

Would be a *marvelous* day — if, as I say,

I must lie here and weakly succumb to such outdoor trivia,

Then the least that I or anyone trapped with a clipboard

Should (always should) do

Is not this.

True.

This is always true.

It was true some time ago when Antony ditched

The Egyptian fleet — a girl was the weather

That day — and true too when Macbeth found somebody

Sitting where he was to sit (but the chair was empty).

Indeed one could dazzle the world with instances, mostly

From Shakespeare, proving

That any man of resolve, any man with a mission

Should not

Do what he does but should rise (always rise)

To where it is sunny; and there, undistracted

By anything but a hurricane, say, or a change

Of administration, should keep

Close to his clipboard and write, if he writes.

Treatises mostly, not poems, for treatises seldom

Traffic in weather as poems do,

And may (the treatises) best be composed in a windowless

Room underground where the outside world

Is represented ideally by four white walls

And a picture by some gay cubist of what could not possibly

Be wet leaves, wet grass, wet laundry, and so on.

REED WHITTEMORE

The French Neo-Realists

J. G. Weightman

WHEN the English version of Alain Robbe-Grillet's novel, *Le Voyeur*, was published recently, it received a chilly reception in *Partisan Review*, the *Observer* and the *New Statesman*. Michel Butor's *La Modification* had an even rougher passage when it came out in translation several months ago. For the English-speaking literary public, Nathalie Sarraute, Jean Cayrol, Claude Simon, Robert Pinget, are hardly more than names, if they are even that. It may, therefore, not be generally realized how large these various writers loom at the moment in their native French setting, although they are fiercely attacked by some critics. They form an avant-garde of "experimentalists," which has no parallel, so far as I know, in England and America. The three foremost figures, Robbe-Grillet, Sarraute and Butor have produced, in the typical French manner, theoretical statements to justify the sort of books they write. More important still, each has, or has had, the backing of a professional philosopher. Since 1954, Robbe-Grillet's aesthetic has been expounded by the neo-Marxist Roland Barthes; one of Nathalie Sarraute's novels appeared with an introduction by Sartre; Butor has been the subject of lectures by the eminent Hegelian, Jean Hyppolite, who must be almost twice his age. In France, then, a considerable amount of dust has been raised. The question is: are we remaining insensitive to a new and exciting phase in the history of the novel, or are the French creating an undue fuss? I should like to give a tentative answer in the form of a few remarks on the Robbe-Grillet, Sarraute, Butor trio. Anyone wishing further information is advised to look at the special number of the review *Esprit* on "Le Nouveau Roman" (July/August 1958).

As might be expected, the trio is a verbal convenience rather than a reality. There is no guarantee that the three writers like, or even read, each other's works. They first achieved wide fame when *La Modification* won the Prix Renaudot in 1957. But, strangely enough, Butor is the youngest of the

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April 25, 1959

Michel Butor. *Change of Heart (La Modification)*. Simon & Schuster. \$3.75.

Jean Cayrol. *All in a Night*. British Book Centre. \$3.25.

Alain Robbe-Grillet. *The Voyeur*. Grove Press. \$3.50; paper, \$1.75.

Nathalie Sarraute. *Portrait of a Man Unknown (Portrait d'un inconnu)*. George Braziller. \$3.50.

Claude Simon. *The Wind*. George Braziller. \$3.95.

three (Robbe-Grillet is four years older and Madame Sarraute belongs to a completely different generation) and he is the least serious as an *avant-gardiste*. To add to the complication, it is generally believed that Butor was really given the award, not for *La Modification*, but for his previous book, *L'Emploi du temps*, which is rather less "Grilletesque" than his prize novel. However, *La Modification* popularized the idea of a "school." The school exists only in the sense that the writers concerned refer to one another with respect. Butor has, perhaps, borrowed something from Robbe-Grillet. Robbe-Grillet and Nathalie Sarraute do not look towards Butor, and are themselves allied only insofar as they are both reacting against what they call the "traditional" novel; their aims and achievements are very different.

The longest theoretical statement has been made by Nathalie Sarraute in her collection of articles entitled *L'Ere du soupçon*. It is not possible in a short summary to do justice to her many subtle remarks on French, English and Russian fiction (Russian was her childhood language and she knows English very well), but it is perhaps fair to say that she is obsessed by the idea that any literary form which has been adequately used is thereby rendered obsolete. It is the duty of the serious writer to react against routine and constantly to extend the range of his art. She is convinced in particular that the traditional "character" is an outdated artifice, and that the usual narrative devices are too crude to serve any further purpose. A key word in her vocabulary is the term she used as the title of her first book: *Tropismes*. According to the dictionary, a tropism is "a turning of the organism in a certain direction in response to some external stimulus." Nathalie Sarraute seems to have an al-

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most Jungian conception of the truth about human nature lying below personality and having to be sought for behind the verbal commonplaces that people ordinarily take to be their "characters." From her books and her conversation one gets the impression that she would like to take a microscope to human nature in order to bring to light the tiny, and as yet anonymous, impulses which literary technique has so far been too coarse to grasp. She admires Proust, Virginia Woolf and, above all, Dostoevsky, and appears to want to go still further into the depths than they did.

On her actual production—*Tropismes*, *Portrait d'un inconnu* and *Martereau*—I cannot speak with confidence, because I am not sure that I have understood it. It consists largely of fine, psychological analyses written in beautifully precise and apt French, and with a remarkable feeling for the rhythms of conversation. Sartre, in his introduction to *Portrait d'un inconnu*, explains excellently that Nathalie Sarraute's attention is fixed on the oscillation, in a given person, between the social persona, which is always tending to be dominant, and the authentic truth of the individual, which is glimpsed only at intervals (and is, no doubt, a deeper form of general truth). As Sartre puts it:

The reader must not look in Nathalie Sarraute's book for something that she does not wish to give us; for her, a man is not a character, nor in the first place a story nor even a web of habit: he is a soft and incessant oscillation between the particular and the general.

I follow this, and I seem to understand any page or chapter of Madame Sarraute's books as I read it. What eludes me is the over-all literary effect. *Tropismes* is successful as a series of prose poems, of moments or visions with no links between them, except the permanent obsession in the writer's mind. *Portrait d'un inconnu* appears to be an attempt to weld a lot of similar moments into a whole, but this whole is too static, too unventilated, to produce a general aesthetic impression. Sartre calls it "an anti-novel which reads like a detective story." I don't find that. The book seems to be committing suicide as a novel all the way through, and reminds me very much of Virginia Woolf's later works. Is it naive to suggest that Madame Sarraute's ambivalent view of the character might have been incorporated in a more ordinary fictional framework? Or that her vision has not found a total, aesthetic form? Perhaps I am just blind to her new form, like a nineteenth-century

bourgeois looking at an impressionist painting. I read her with interest, respect and frustration, just as I read Valéry's poem, *La Jeune Parque*, which also seems to consist of moments which do not coalesce into a whole.

ACTUALLY, painting and Valéry are both very relevant to a discussion of the "new" novel. Robbe-Grillet, like Nathalie Sarraute, feels that while the fine arts, poetry and music have had their revolution, the novel has been left behind. As for Valéry, it was he who started a considerable controversy in the thirties by saying that he would never produce a novel, because he could not bring himself to write anything so banal as "La marquise sortit à cinq heures," a phrase which has now become proverbial and may be partly responsible—together with the general Mallarméan tendency towards the unexplained—for the Robbe-Grillet, Sarraute revolt against the banal.

As a novelist, Robbe-Grillet appears, at first sight, even more suicidal than Nathalie Sarraute, because he not only rejects the traditional "character" and the usual techniques of story-telling, but also refuses to believe in the psychological depths that Nathalie Sarraute is trying to define. His major pronouncements are contained in two articles published by the *Nouvelle Revue Française* (July 1956 and October 1958). In these he pours scorn on the usual fictional treatment of both the internal and the external worlds. The novelist who claims to know what goes on "inside" his characters, who explains them as he goes along in terms of some particular philosophy or psychology, is exceeding his brief. People just *are*, and it is their existence, rather than their supposed essence, that the novelist should be concerned with. At the same time, the non-human world just *is*, independently of our emotions about it, and it is sheer sentimentality to use it as a means of reinforcing our subjective moods. Robbe-Grillet discards, then, both "human nature," which he treats as a comic expression, and the pathetic fallacy. For him, even the concept of the "absurd" is a sentimentalizing of reality. It goes without saying that he does not deal with any general social or political issues, because they can only be thought about in terms of impure essences. It is almost as if a Logical Positivist of the severest kind had decided to write a novel. It is no accident that Robbe-Grillet is a scientist, a former *ingénieur-agronome*. The mystery is: why should a person with this kind of mind want to

write a novel at all? The explanation must lie in some region that could be reached only by recourse to the psychological theories that Robbe-Grillet despises.

It is fascinating, and for some readers excruciatingly tedious, to watch him trying to square the circle. How is he going to tell a story about human beings if he doesn't believe in "human nature"? The answer is that he doesn't tell the story but suggests it. When you have got through *Le Voyeur*, you know that it is about a commercial traveler, Matthias, who, after several years' absence, comes back to his native island off the mainland to sell watches. While he is there, a young girl is raped, strangled and thrown into the sea. Presumably the crime was committed by Matthias, because he behaves to some extent as if he expected to be arrested for it. However, he eventually takes a boat back to the mainland, without any crisis having occurred. Robbe-Grillet creates suspense by describing things from the point of view of Matthias, while leaving out most of the information about the hero that would normally be put in. The title, *Le Voyeur*, is, of course, a pun. Matthias is mainly a pair of eyes, *un regard*, carefully noting physical detail as the boat docks, numbly enumerating the material objects which come his way—the parts of a bicycle or the furniture of a room—approaching people from the outside and seeing them as collections of data to be interpreted, but often not admitting of any definable interpretation. As the reader advances through the book, the pressure of what is being left unsaid becomes tremendous, all the more so since, in those places where there would normally be a psychological explanation, Robbe-Grillet provides an elaborate and sterilized description of external, material circumstances which, by its very impersonality, appears intensely neurotic.

AS a matter of fact, he cheats a little. Matthias' consciousness includes some recollections of childhood, for instance, visions of a girl being put to death and an obsession with clean, strong pieces of string. The suggestion seems to be that the murder, if he committed it, was a working out of some childhood sadistic fantasy. If this is so, then we have here the beginning of a psychological explanation, and if we are given the beginning, there seems to be no reason, other than willfulness, for depriving us of its development. Also, why are we not told definitely about the carrying out of the murder? It

cannot be that the author is deliberately keeping us guessing; that would be just a superficial trick. Does he mean us to understand that the act itself was a form of madness that has left no clear memory in Matthias' mind? Or something so terrible that his consciousness refuses to return to it? Or is the hero so unbalanced that he does not know whether or not he committed the crime?

Another peculiarity is that the descriptions are written by the author in the most chaste and meticulous French. Would the commercial traveler, even if he had passed his *bachot*, be likely to perceive the world in these terms? It is no good answering in the usual way that the author's style has to be accepted as a necessary convention, because Robbe-Grillet claims precisely that such so-called necessary conventions should be discarded. But to have a commercial traveler describing things to himself in terms of planes and angles may be just as reprehensible as allowing the external world to assume an emotional significance.

And ultimately, of course, Robbe-Grillet's descriptions are not objective at all, but highly subjective and emotional. The bit of string, the sea-gulls, the incidental characters, the landscape of the island, are seen with an intensity which makes it possible to compare the background of *Le Voyeur* with the vision of Le Havre in Sartre's *La Nausée* or of North Africa in Camus' *L'Etranger* and *La Peste*. Robbe-Grillet does not use metaphors in the same

way as Sartre and Camus, but it is perversity on his part to say that he is describing merely that which *is*. To describe that which *is* is an impossible program. A linguistic description inevitably implies a choice of detail, since the number of possible details even in the simplest situation is always infinite. Robbe-Grillet selects his detail by pretending to avoid, or endeavoring to avoid, immediate personal emotion, but this is to engender emotion by negation. After all, the natural thing, for commercial travelers and everyone else—including scientists when they are off duty—is to see the world in anthropomorphic terms. And even pure science is still a form of anthropomorphism, although a form from which personal identity has been removed. For some reason, which he may not understand himself, Robbe-Grillet prefers a quasi-scientific vision, and he finds his emotional release in that, leaving the personal, human problem unstated. But it weighs all the more heavily on his writing and turns *Le Voyeur* into an elaborate still life, which derives its quality from the fact that the world is being presented, if not as absurd, certainly with a film of mysteriousness clinging to every detail.

The paradox is even more visible in the later book, *La Jalousie*, which is supposed to be an account of the relationship between a woman and a possible lover, as seen by the woman's husband. It is mainly a collection of obsessive descriptions of the tropical

bungalow inhabited by the couple, and the time sequence is jumbled, as occasionally in *Le Voyeur*, presumably to show that the consciousness does not operate chronologically. Again the writing is very impressive and haunting, but I cannot understand why the husband is outside the story. Matthias was in his, to some extent. The husband is an invisible presence, an observant ghost, who neither speaks nor is spoken to. Is he simply putting together, at some later date, those moments during which he was watching, unseen by the other two? Why should he think of his wife as A., but of the supposed lover by his full name, Franck? Why should there be such complete uncertainty about the relationship among these three people? I am not sure whether the answers I could suggest to these questions would be the correct ones, but I think it is obvious that *La Jalousie* is not a novel; it is a long, essentially poetic, short story. (Robbe-Grillet cannot write a successful short short story, because his cumulative descriptive method requires a certain amount of space.) I found it just as difficult to get through as *Le Voyeur* but, like the earlier work, it remains in the memory in a tantalizing, inexplicable way.

BUTOR makes no secret of the relationship between poetry and his kind of novel. In a lecture I heard him give in Paris at Christmas, he explained that he began his career by writing verse and that his aim is to create, in the novel, the kind of ritualized, poetic experience which, he says, is no longer possible on the level of actual living in our contemporary, non-organic societies. This sounds like a deliberate turning away from reality towards a "life in art," something much more old-fashioned than Robbe-Grillet's and Nathalie Sarraute's struggle to come closer to truth as they see it. He resembles them, however, in the minuteness of his natural descriptions and in a certain feeling for the mysterious fluctuations of life.

There is nothing "difficult" about him. *L'Emploi du temps* is perhaps rather complicated, in the sense that it is written as a diary in which the author—a young Frenchman working in an English town—tries to understand how the events of the last few months have led up to his present situation, so that on some pages he is dealing with two or three overlapping periods. I cannot see that this is very significant, because the plot—involving the symbolism of the cathedral windows, a detective story and the hero's relationships with

And Goe the Fooles Among

(*Fool's Song, King Lear*)

When death has chastened me
into my final modesty my silence
will be attributed to inability
and not to reticence.

So—while my tongue has power to move—
let me a trifle boldly speak my mind
that my dead silence may reverberate
some truth when I am mute and blind.

Yet even a little truth is far too much
for crooked ears to catch, curled brains to carry.
Truth-tellers must take one of two rewards:
laughter or bloody thorns—both mockery.

Yet mockery may serve. The mockers,
hearing their laughter gone too high and thin,
may grow abashed. And that is a beginning.
Why not be mocked if something may begin?

This was the headlong choice of Fools
even before Jesus. One dare not claim to be
so great a Fool as he. But one can try
using his crazy magnanimity.

DILYS LAING

some English people, a Frenchman and a Negro—really comes to nothing in the end. It is just a plaintive fantasy, peopled by wraith-like characters. What is conveyed magnificently is the atmosphere of the grim, rainy, sooty, introverted English town, which the Frenchman describes with a resigned horror amounting almost to love. If Butor had been able to put people into this atmosphere, he would have written a masterpiece that need not have had anything “experimental” about it. But his weakness seems to be that he is a word-spinner with a feeling for atmosphere and detail, and little sense of the reality of individuals; that is, he treats them conventionally and feebly, and is without that strong objection to them as entities which gives a paradoxical kick to Robbe-Grillet’s and Nathalie Sarraute’s books. *La Modification* contains two excellent gimmicks—the use

of the train journey between Paris and Rome as a means of self-discovery and the hero’s self-apostrophizing as “vous,” which shows how unfamiliar he is with himself until he discovers his true feelings. But these feelings are uninteresting, the other characters are insipid and the elaborate descriptions of the train and the landscapes are not “felt” in the same way as the descriptions of England in *L’Emploi du temps*.

I should say, then, that Butor is fundamentally a traditionalist, capable of an occasional, poetic feeling for atmosphere, and that his weaknesses have nothing to do with experiment. Robbe-Grillet and Nathalie Sarraute, on the other hand, have staked their future on genuinely wrenching the form into new shapes. Their writing has an intensity about it which suggests that they could not, in any case, have done otherwise.

without my consent or control. The editing did nothing to change them, in essence, but did reduce them in substance and so *did* change them. It is pointless to quarrel with the make-up of a magazine. A magazine must contain a great many things, not the least of them the paid advertisements which often make publication possible. Every linear inch saved in one department serves to butter the bread of another. “Bad” reviews were scanted on the ground that space should not be given to “negative” criticism but to “positive” or “praising” criticism. “Very bad” reviews were, sometimes, not published at all. Nothing unreasonable about that. Immoral, perhaps, but not unreasonable.

NOW what business has a novelist reviewing the work of other novelists? There is a whole body of people who earn livings (not large ones, I presume and even hope) out of the business of writing about writing. They constitute a vested interest and are not likely to think novelists capable of judging novels. Now and then they have said so, although only in a muttering voice. Even novelists, when they consider the matter, wonder if it is proper. John O’Hara once remarked that he did not think it proper for one professional writer to publicly appraise the work of another professional writer. I presume that O’Hara’s concept of appraisal runs largely to disapproval. That assumption is made because O’Hara does judge and in his preface to an edition of selected works by F. Scott Fitzgerald he delivers that deft O’Hara chop to the adam’s apple which finishes off Sinclair Lewis,

How to Make Enemies

David Karp

A FEW YEARS ago I was asked to review novels for a leading national magazine. My agent, asked for her opinion, replied in a word: No. Pressed for a further opinion, she added, “(a) There is no money in reviewing novels; (b) It can only create enemies for you.”

There is no argument to be made with the first part of her statement. Reviewing, as it is done by hundreds of men and women, is ill-paid labor. I make no solicitation upon their behalf, nor do I encourage unionization in this field. The laborer, in this instance, is too often not worthy of his hire.

The second part of her argument incensed me dangerously. Bristling over it, I plunged at once into reviewing. In about a year and a half I reviewed twenty books; all novels. While I am not nearly as methodical as Arnold Bennett, I do keep records; principally for the sake of the Internal Revenue Service and incidentally to arm me against a vulnerable memory.

When I break down the reviews of the twenty books, I find that five I praised most highly, six I appraised moderately and eight novels I lashed and seared with what anger and rebuke I could muster. Of the five novels I praised highly, only one came to any national prominence and that through nomination for the National Book

Awards. It did not win. Of the six I praised moderately, one was a block-busting, national bestseller. Of the eight on which I heaped anger, scorn, contempt and hot coals, in varying amounts, one was sold to the movies, another was optioned for stage dramatization and the rest somewhat bleakly disappeared, although I am not at all certain that I had any influence on their disappearance.

I surely must have made eight enemies, possibly five friends. I received two letters of thanks for my reviews; one from an author whose work I moderately praised and one from an editor on behalf of a writer whose work I had highly praised. My enemies, so far as I know, are still working underground. The net effect, viewed statistically, was unimpressive. The moral effect, so far as I am concerned, was satisfying. I did no “log-rolling,” settled no long-standing grudges, initiated no new friendships and in a world already uneasy and hostile, I created eight fresh enemies for myself and for what I do in the future. I also earned something less than \$500 for the twenty reviews.

My agent, therefore, seemed to be borne out in her judgment. And still, I am not sorry, nor dismayed, nor even indifferent. I am satisfied, in my own mind, that twenty novels, of the thousands published, received fair reviews. Not only did they receive fair reviews, but they received professional reviews. Here and there my reviews were edited

Weed

When all the brawls are done
and the cold cities tumbled down,
will there rise somewhere from the weed
a proud woman like a goddess
and a mortal man to serve her need?

Nothing will rise again,
love, treachery, insult, or pain,
but less than human triumph make
a more than bestial wilderness
where even flesh will its flesh forsake.

Surely, there still will be
something true of human beauty,
in the immeasurable wild
perhaps, living in gentleness,
will be some lost girl and a lost child.

Weed will cover it all,
choking weed and a dusty pall.
With this, you must be well content,
having won with clear, pitiless
logic, the whole human argument.

GENE BARO

DAVID KARP is the author of *Leave Me Alone*, *All Honorable Men* and *The Day of the Monkey*.

Pearl Buck, a string of forgotten Scandinavian Nobel Prize-winners, some unnamed critics and one playwright whom I suspect was Eugene O'Neill. All of this in defense of Scott Fitzgerald's right to a Nobel Prize. O'Hara is willing to judge other novelists and critics for the sake of a dead friend, unwilling to judge them for the sake of the art he practices. Well, that's what's wrong with O'Hara. He subscribes to the schoolboy's code of ethics. Don't knock one of your own gang to the grownups. The critics O'Hara detests subscribe to the same code. They do not knock one another. The interlocking agreements, silent, traditional and inflexible (except for an outraged squeak here and there) keep the novelists out of criticism and the critics out of touch with the novelists. The solution to this problem is not to get the critics and the novelists to mingle. God forbid. I attended one meeting of the National Book Awards and was shown about and introduced by my editor. I formed, on meeting, intense dislikes for at least two critics whom I had never met before and who had never reviewed me. When you form such intense personal distaste for men upon first meeting, you arouse in them reciprocal feelings. Greater mingling might lead to truly disastrous results.

The solution, and many people may not agree that there is a problem which needs solving, lies in encouraging novelists to review, in taking back some of the field of criticism which has fallen, by default, into a lot of hot, sticky little hands.

LITERARY criticism in this country principally appears in three media: in periodicals; in books, very often collections of pieces from periodicals; and in financial statements released by booksellers to newspapers.

To take the last first; the bestseller list is a form of literary criticism which suits democratic egalitarianism in its more extreme form. The taste of ten men being ten times the taste of one, the taste of a hundred, a hundred times. Under this regime of public taste, a work can acquire merit by the sheer weight of copies sold. But in a democratic society taste is discarded along with, and almost with the same frequency as, the evening trash. James Oliver Curwood and Michael Arlen are forgotten although each sold novels in the millions. They were each discarded by a change in public taste. Not an improved public taste, merely a changed one. For the work of merit which hits and stays on the bestseller list I feel nothing but pleasure. I gather from it no hints of

the improvement of the deep instincts of public taste. The occasional acceptance of a good book by large numbers of people indicates deeply and simply nothing. Fifty million Frenchmen can't be wrong, the old song or motto goes. Yes, they can. It depends upon what they agree. On books, they and we can be, and most often are, wrong in impressive numbers.

Newspaper reviewing veers from work done by part-time reviewers (librarians, retired ministers, teachers of English, etc.) for small-town papers to fill-in work by gossip columnists. The work of small-town reviewers can be remarkably rewarding and sometimes funny. One reviewer did not read my book at all. He took his review for my book from the publisher's descriptive copy on the dust jacket — not merely the summary of the plot, but all of the adjectival comments, as well. In Southern California, for instance (and I accept no cries of "unfair!" for choosing this instance), the movie gossip columnist reviewed my book and summed it up with the unforgettable remark, "This one is a weirdie." So is he. The organs which influence mass literary opinion are few and far between. They are, with possibly one or two lesser influences, *Time*, *The New Yorker* and *The New York Times*.

Orville Prescott provides for his middle-brow readers in *The New York Times* that balance of Nice-Nellyism, moral righteousness, maddeningly condescending fair-mindedness and little-boy earnestness which suits the tone of the newspaper perfectly. I despair of the *Times* ever improving its daily reviewing simply because the *Times*, like the good gray eminence it is, will not let the long, red, wild tongue of criticism utter a razzberry when a razzberry is called for. When the *Times* disapproves, it tucks its hands into its mandarin sleeves and remains silent. Gilbert Millstein, who spends his time interviewing television writers whom he loathes and busty starlets whom he equally, but not so apparently, dislikes, ought to be encouraged to do more reviewing. I say this despite the fact that his enfevered hosannahs for Jack Kerouac's beaten porridge betrays a certain deficiency of taste. But his criticism shows, what I have read of it, a passion, a concern, a love of books. These are also detectable in Herbert Mitgang. Passion is vitally missing from most of the reviewers in this country, including many of the "serious" critics: called "serious," I presume, to distinguish them from the frivolous critics. Edmund Wilson has the passion but is so wrapped up in mat-

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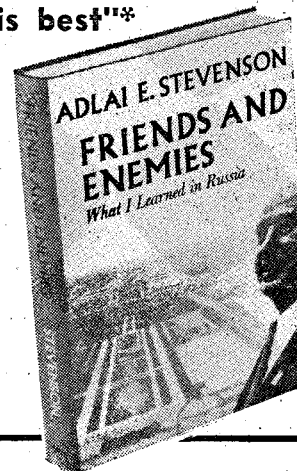
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ters far afield from current literature that he finally acknowledged what all but the purblind already knew, that he had neither the time nor the will to consider current literature on its own merits.

Time and *The New Yorker* maintain batteries of anonymous sharpshooters whose identities are carefully concealed to protect them from, I presume, public opprobrium and reprisal. Alexander King, that charming medical ruin, observed recently that *Time*, for the sake of a witticism (Timestyle) or a pun or a tricky turn of phrase would shred a man's reputation. This same reaching for the nice effect can be found in *The New Yorker*, with the same nice disregard for a writer's reputation. Anonymous reviewing, along with anonymous letters, deserves nothing but contempt.

The New Yorker's signed reviews do a book justice in length. Anthony West takes first place here. I particularly enjoyed the acid minority opinion he entered against *The Last Hurrah* when he called it a "truly subversive book." Dwight MacDonald, when he reviews, is worth reading although what makes MacDonald worth reading is that delicate chalice of malice he bears on his shoulder. Malice, in fact, is that faint essence which one scents throughout *The New Yorker*. Hard to find, in the same way as it is difficult to find the perfume in a letter, but it is there and probably does more to sell the magazine than any other single ingredient. Norman Podhoretz, who appears to be of the "new" school of literary criticism, is earnest, pedantic and dull. I consider the pursuit of the symbol with butterfly net and ouija board through the pages of a book a wild waste of time, and yet it appears to be the principal occupation of the "new" critics.

THE second part of the problem of criticism in our country lies in the laps of the literary quarterlies, and is embedded in the seats of creative writing established at universities about the country. These people deal largely in a selective literary stock exchange whose shares, common and preferred, they have issued themselves and which change hands at face value in their own little kingdoms and are accepted, at discounted rates, in the world outside. For writers listed on their big boards, the trading can be brisk and stimulating. For writers not listed, and I include myself in this out-group with no intention of creating a Goldwynism, there is no trading, no criticism, and no exchange of views. I might be writing in Sudanese for all the attention I get. On the other hand, if I did write in

Sudanese I might be listed and traded because I could then be made the property of the Sudanese-reading experts and the subject of their expertise. These people, almost without exception, are not interested in books. They are interested in the exchange of opinions and the establishment of "credits" which lead to promotions in the academic world, increased fees on the lecture circuits, supplementary documentation of their expertise for obtaining grants and fellowships, and invitations to writers' conferences. Books, novelists, exist as a reservoir of plastic material for them to manipulate, shape, fire and sell.

The simplest fact of the matter is

that no one really goes on writing novels unless he considers them of great importance in the world. I include in this company the rich and successful novelists as well as the poor and struggling ones. These men and women care about their profession, their art and their craft. They ought to care enough about it to protect it from incompetent, casual, flippant and self-seeking appraisal. No one would entrust his corns to the paring knife of a podiatrist who looked as though he cared little for corn-paring. If we wouldn't trust our corns to someone who didn't care about them, then for God's sake, why trust our books to people who don't care?

The Execrators

Duck's-assed and leather-jacketed,
Dispensing shrill laughter, they tread
Lightly the pocked oval of light
In the dark street, lifting a right
Gracefully just to graze the cheek
Of the opponent, who sidles sleek
Up from under, hooking a swift,
Imaginary knife. They shift,
Then freeze into a slouch to let
The stranger dream they've never met
Or that such unity as theirs
Needs no acknowledgment. Their stares
Hide only the possibility
They will not ask the time. As he
Consults his watch, the stranger's half-
Tripped, half-trips himself, on a laugh
Shaped like a boot's gleam and gone.
His tie that they admire is torn
Apart in the same breath, as are
The bills he proffers to the air.
Asked for a light, he holds the flame,
Forced, under his nose, and hears a maimed
Voice inquire if he will not please
Unzip his fly. Down on his knees,
He hugs his screaming groin. Asked where
His money is, he feels blood flare
Along his lip, a live ash break
Over his eye. "It's a mistake . . ."
He hears a voice purr, one reply,
"It always is — they never play
It dead!" Lids clenched, holding his breath,
Suddenly he brings forth a wreath
Of vomit. "What a filthy clown!"
"Look at the liar!" A pipe's brought down
Upon his teeth. His mind cuts through
The brambles of his pain to view
The broken skull it cannot fit.
What further wounds they could inflict
Would serve only to let him know
He were alive; therefore, they flow
In single file into the night.
Raked by their buttons' wolfish light,
He turns into a tree of fire
Felled, through which low laughter expires.

DAVID GALLER

Characters and Ideas: The Modern Novel

Melvin Seiden

COMPLAINTS against the critics have arisen again. Like Milton's delinquent shepherd, they are accused of piping "their lean and flashy songs," while the hungry writers "look up and are not fed." The critics, we are told, usurp the power of the poets and, instead of protecting them from the contempt and vindictiveness which society turns on its freest minds, have joined forces with the Philistines. In the case of the novel, Granville Hicks insists, some of our distinguished and powerful critics are indeed its enemies. A few seasons back, Hicks published a symposium, *The Living Novel*. Harvey Swados, himself a novelist, contributed an essay dealing with the fate of the modern novel and naming such critics. Leslie Fiedler was one.

Swados' essay tells the old story of the ingrate critic biting the hand that feeds him. It is the perennial issue of creativity pitted against the intellect that murders to dissect and of parasitism: the critic as tick, hanging on the bleeding ear of the long-suffering poet.

I admire this essay and am moved by its fervor. I would be willing to place it in the good company in which it belongs, beside those other eloquent briefs in behalf of the unfettered poet, Sidney's, Shelley's and Judge Woolsey's. It is always stimulating to watch someone come out swinging and Swados is not just anyone; he is a serious writer. He has chosen worthy targets. Academic critics are neither weak nor contemptible, though no one interested in these things can fail to recognize, as Swados points out, how easy it now is to establish a minor reputation as a critic by the simple exercise of reverent exegesis of movements or witty demolition of neophytes.

In a healthy criticism, critical force would be deployed differently and with a paradoxical wisdom: our Ph.D.s, reversing the all too common strategy, would train their exegetical lenses on the small, new, unassimilated works of contemporary literature, saving the hit-and-run bombs—if demolish they must—for the big boys, dead, canonized and of course really impregnable. Shaw had the right idea, and it's a pity that the young novelists don't get more of our piety and the O.K. writers less.

The trouble, though, with approach-

ing the condition of the American novel through anger or pleasure, or talking about the friends and enemies of the novel, is that it then becomes impossible to make distinctions. Maybe it would be better if the barricades were up and the friends and enemies could slug it out once and for all. But the most excitable reporter would have to admit that what we experience now is a sluggish cold war, and while we have this peace of a sort, we might as well enjoy the civilian luxury of making distinctions.

As in politics, the last freedom that the independent mind should be willing to give up is the right to say, "I'm with you, but. . ." Partisans and ideologues, political and critical, are unwilling to allow these *buts*. Reservations and qualifications strike the man who keeps shouting at you, "But which side are you on?" as the beginning of apostasy. And if anyone supposes that renegade-hunting takes place mainly in the wild and woolly preserves of the left-wing, let him read the literary journals and try to find out, for an instance, who are the true inheritors of the Coleridgean revolution and who its betrayers.

Granville Hicks, Harvey Swados, Saul Bellow and most of the other contributors to *The Living Novel* and I have a lot of common enemies. But how sad it is — as in politics, where a similar list might be compiled — how disillusioning, to discover that the common ground of opposition to the Wouks and the Irwin Shaws and the "Satreviewers" is not enough. We have to face the problem of determining what we are in favor of, of specifying, at least roughly, what sort of novel we would like to see get written, read and properly understood.

Now I was delighted to find in Herbert Gold's essay in *The Living Novel* ("The Mystery of Personality in the Novel") a description of the kind of novel that might induce even Leslie Fiedler to give up the films for an evening of reading. Gold spoke of the novelist as one who

suggests a vision of the good life . . . is concerned with the mysterious longing of individuals to create and renew. . . . [He is] the personality capable of mysteries. He signifies. His passion defines freedom for all of us. . . . The novelist must reach for the grownup, risking, athletic personality, surely must in some way

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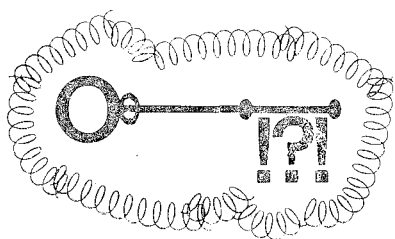
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be this person, in order to find a hero who gives the sense of men at their best on earth; and catch him finally where his great gifts do not suffice; this is tragedy. [And he must find a style.] A style which attempts to use all a writer knows to tell all he can imagine involves a moral stance in favor of intelligence and liberty and risk taking.

This is the manifesto of a writer who is unalarmed by the fashionable bogey of romantic excess; if he has to choose between the deep hungry bite and the finicky nibble, he will not deny his romantic hunger. In poker, politics and war the principle of mini-max may be the highest wisdom: the greatest risk commensurate with maximum gain and minimum loss. Commensurate — and with a poker-eye glued to the shifting point of diminishing returns. But Herbert Gold's Promethean novelist is willing to chance the hubris of continual maximums. And that is why "the failures [of such novelists] are peculiarly ungracious: they intend otherwise. They will try again next time."

BUT it is not this Promethean impulse that is responsible for the failures of Herbert Gold's new novel. *The Optimist* is a curiously flat performance which, in the context of the writer's ardent aims and his earlier novels, seems almost a recantation. If *The Optimist* is not a disavowal of these aims, what are we to make of the fact that Herbert Gold has written a thoroughly conventional novel? The longing and risking that Gold speaks of in his essay begin with "a vision of the good life," but they end in tragedy. In *The Optimist* they lead to the stout-hearted middling vision of a Marquand or a Sloan Wilson because, coming at it in his own way, Gold has managed to write a novel that, with no embarrassment or evasions, says of life in America pretty much what Henry Luce has been telling our novelists they *should* be saying: that it is various and exhilarating; that its bottomless grab-bag of experience must be accepted in joy and grappled with in pride; that criticism, no matter how truly conceived or necessary, is a spot of dust, a mere smudge on the picture window that opens out on an America of inexhaustible potentiality for aliveness.

In the Augustan fifties there's no escaping George Babbitt's crude dialectic: what separates the boys from the men is whether you are a booster or a knocker. And *The Optimist* must take its place beside the now considerable body of fiction, criticism, historiography and politics whose affirmations will let

you have them either way, as a culturally conceived Americanness or a chauvinistic Americanism.

The Optimist — if the title is ironical it will beget another irony, and that at the novelist's expense, since his readers are bound to take it neat — is a novel that never tires of telling us, and occasionally fatigues us by insisting, that it is good to be alive in America. American sorrows, too, are happy.

Throughout the novel there is an over-assertive euphoria, how insistent can be gauged by the high temperature of the ending. Burr Fuller, the resilient hero-optimist walks the streets of Detroit. Everything — youth, love, marriage, politics — seems to have turned to ashes. But not even these failures and the discovery of the well-meaning little meannesses of his heart and mind are corrosive enough to dissolve the ongoing potency of Burr's essential individuating trait, his desire for desire; "but the only release from desire is gratified desire, not oblivion or immolation."

"Why not try more?" he asks himself. "More. More. More! More! More!" the optimist cries out at the end; and I found myself remembering that terrible moment in the "Ode on a Grecian Urn" of bathos become sublimity, when the poet forces himself to exult, "Happy, happy, happy . . ." interminably, and I could never believe him for a minute. Keats, I think, wanted us to see the desperate straining. Does Herbert Gold?

IT WOULD be unfair to criticize the optimism of *The Optimist* because it was written in determined forgetfulness of *Candide*. There is, after all, the transcendent and almost irrational optimism of *King Lear* and *The Brothers Karamazov*. Herbert Gold's doctrine of joy might have seemed less fatiguing if he had been able to render the thing itself — aliveness — and this he cannot do because he has given vitality little opportunity to become incarnate. The hero's vitality, like so much of his sex, is in his head. It is not, however, subtle or passionate thought, which is a kind of vitality that no one is going to quarrel with. Despite his efforts to convince, or if need be to bully, by a heroic straining of the resources of his language, Gold cannot make me believe that Burr Fuller is passionate, only passionately hungry for passion. He has given his hero an almost stupefyingly bland set of credentials which, when totted up, describe the everyman who is the norm of our postwar fiction.

The hero is the brighter-than-average Protestant fraternity boy of one of

the better midwestern universities; the not unreasonably confused young lover, faced with choosing between simple animal sex (she is always willing) and another kind of animal cunning, unwilling (Laura, the suburban tease, later to become the castrating suburban wife); the moderately brave soldier — no heroics, only elemental human decency; the ambitious, half-honest, half-opportunistic politician who, in a finely calibrated Chamber, would sit in the left-wing of the center group of a liberal party; the unworthy one who, betraying the one true friend, becomes Judas and in *that* recognition, the Suffering Servant as well. Plainly, excepting the desire for desire, the formula for the character of Burr Fuller is Nothing to Excess. He does not quite fall into the statistical norm for sexuality, marital devotion and extra-marital lechery, correct political attitudes, loyalty and dishonesty, self-insight and self-delusion. The best that can be said of this optimist, statistically considered — which is how he invites us to consider him — is that he exhibits a slightly asymmetrical balance.

AN earlier novel, *The Man Who Was Not With It* is a better and more satisfying book than *The Optimist*; and whatever its faults, it is not bland and bloodless as *The Optimist* often is under the heavy flesh of its protesting affirmations. Here, for example, is Gold rendering the encounter of bodies. The writing in *The Man Who Was Not With It* is often better and sometimes worse, so this passage is special only in that it is physical, and typical only in that it gives one some sense of the authenticity of his writing:

She dog-paddled and I dove beneath the surface, opening my eyes but seeing first the violent green sparkle of the water striking the eye, then only a kaleidoscope dazzle of eyeball music. I knew where and how she was. I found her and, turning sideways, put my head between her legs, my teeth at her thigh, thrusting them apart; but then she tightened swiftly and her long legs were wrapped about my shoulders, persevering and squeezing as if to have done with me by drowning. The violence startled me; I was taken by panic even in play and rolled over, blowing bubbles and reaching with my hands. She held still and more tightly. I dove deeper, carrying her, dragging her under, and then wrestled loose and we clung to each other, embracing with bursting lungs, dim and caught without breath and

flying like minnows in dizziness and fright. I felt the long wet coolness of her body even in my despair of breath. . . .

I can believe that the man who wrote this said, "I want to show them what it's really like to experience desire as something more than an itch of the loins." Gold's intelligence is the brightness of skill, exuberance, and his prized risk-taking. It is the sheer vitality of a talented writer.

The notebooks of Henry James show him badgering the implications of his themes and ideas; and in the novels we see that the violence he has been forced to commit upon language is the direct consequence of this compulsive need to milk these human relationships dry. The notion that the James manner is cause

and the stuff of his novels effect — the cart before the horse — is only a half truth. Even if it is true that in the late novels manner becomes so obtrusive as to come between the impact of the vision and the reader, there is no denying the inseparable unity of the two. Herbert Gold, however, seems to have found, evolved, or perhaps been born with, a Baroque style that is exciting and controlled; but he has yet to find a theme thick and heavy enough with significance or rooted deeply enough in the universals of "human nature" (in something like the sense in which Dr. Johnson understood the term) to be worthy of this style. His characters are interesting; they are supposed to be driven by elemental passions. But they lack resonance. To put it as Gold himself

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might: they do not signify. The only resonance is that of the word-music; and though rich and various, it sometimes seems like pleasant ornamentation, or fireworks and exhibitionism, and occasionally it reminds me of Parmagianino's mannerist portrait of the long-necked Madonna: exceedingly beautiful, except that a little of such beauty goes a long way.

THERE is a splendid chapter in *The Man Who Was Not With It* entitled "Now time to eat grass." Bud Williams, having tried and failed to live (and to make love) in the non-carnie world, runs away from respectability and back to the carnival, where he senses (rightly) that he has his only chance of finding manhood. As Gold sees it, the carnie world of drifters, grifters, marks and wise charlatans still nurtures opportunities for moral responsibility, while the macrocosm beyond the tents is sick and dishonest. On the road, Bud encounters "a Boston Wop Irisher." Broke though he is, Bud takes this pathetic "adenoidal, dog-eyed [kid who] . . . was born for one reason only: to be misunderstood from coast to coast" and stakes him to some grub at a diner. In the sense in which we in America express our deep-rooted and half-apologetic conformism over and over again in ordinary talk and in our popular culture, this bum Andy "with a Hahvahd accent" is "a character." In a few pages Gold catches the look and the feel and the smell of Andy's dopeyness. As portraiture, this is wonderful, but it is a kind of success about which I have some reservations.

Andy is a poor slob. An incompetent bum, he is a combination, so to speak, of the *schmorer* of Yiddish literature and the stock figure of the forever-volunteering dumb private. If Gold intends him to be anything more than a colorful character, his significance apparently lies in the fact that he represents an extreme and grotesque case of the tail-between-legs malaise (thus the image of the chapter title: "now time to eat grass") that afflicts Bud; the point being, however, that Bud, carnie-bound, is on the road to self-respect and maturity, while Andy is hopeless. "Every soul is free and equal on this earth, except that some of them will never come down from the sky."

Andy comes and goes in the one picaresque chapter and is never heard from again, and this cavalier treatment is symptomatic. Gold is addicted to the picturesque. Andy's pathos is not a natural by-product of understanding or the earned increment of a tragic vision. Nor is the pathos exploited for the

honestly meretricious ends of melodrama: as a sweet tearfulness to be relished for its own sake.

The pursuit of the picturesque is the vice of superficiality, and in this sense there is a failure of intelligence in Herbert Gold's novel. The Florentine painters of the Renaissance believed, Vasari tells us, that the use of color is a secondary, superficial and unpainterly skill. It was in drawing, in the architectonic use of line, shape and form that the artist was thought to exhibit his primary and distinguishing skills. Later, the Venetian painters demonstrated that color could be used organically. There are, of course, any number of exceptions, but it remains a truth that color used to heighten and dramatize always *threatens* to become an excrescent prettiness and to arouse the suspicion that there has been a camouflaging of weak bones. And even if the use of a colorist technique as a primary resource may have a certain legitimacy in music and painting (e.g., Titian, Van Gogh, Debussy, Richard Strauss), in literature, its analogue, the picturesque, is always dangerous.

The picturesque novelist may exploit elemental passions and uncover the guerrilla warfare that is perpetually waged even in the most putatively equa-

The Dark the Darkness

The dark the darkness

And all narrow now:

Gloved harness

Where no muscle twitches,

And to the deep meadow

The knee-high wicket:

When night, the sun, the day falls

And sky dispetals.

To dark to darkness

Drive me love by

Bit and bridal

By funnelled parkways

To the deep farms

Where bloom dispetals

In total committal

To your straining arms.

Straining constraining

And so narrow now

Here the white gate

(I lean, I enter)

Is night-high wicket

(And all remaining

Narrows receive me

In their good centre).

Dark O darkness

Night, the sun, day falls

As strict to your harness

I move dancing

And to your governals.

HILARY CORKE

The NATION

ble of societies. He will have a fine ear and a delicate eye for all the queer-nesses of character that shape our ends. But he is interested in these things not as the uncompromisingly serious writer is: for their ability to illuminate what would otherwise remain ineffable in human destiny; he ferrets out what is strange, rare and beautifully or sadly warped because in such people and manners he finds colorful specimens which, like bits of glass, can be fashioned into a mosaic of a novel or play or poem. His purposes are fundamentally minor ones and no matter how seriously he pursues them, he remains a kind of tourist, inviting us to go along with him to sample the sweet-and-sour *smörg-asmord* of humanity.

The Man Who Was Not With It depends too much on Gold's ability to arouse our interest in people and events in this almost frivolous way. For example, there is Grack, Bud's surrogate father, con-man, junky, a man apparently born bitterly wise but also with a Faustian need to humiliate this wisdom by seeking damnation. The moral relationship that Gold wants to establish between Bud and Grack is a vital one. Grack had cured Bud of the habit, and now that he has got himself hooked, Bud must see it through to the end with Grack. The boy who would become a man recognizes that in a moral crisis he must become father to the father. Before Bud can purge himself of the self-contempt he feels in having failed either to share love with or to commit violence against his true father, he must minister to the other father and thus cut the cord tying him to this man who fathered in him the vices and virtues out of which he hopes to create manhood. I believe I have stated Gold's idea correctly. It is an idea around which a novelist of Gold's great talent might have built a mansion of many rooms.

But he hasn't. I have described all there is to describe in Grack. He is all idiosyncrasy. He is, inside and out, "a character," but he *has* no character, so there is no inside. Like Andy, there is a smell of pathos about him; and unlike Andy, there is a suggestion of nobility; but I was too dazzled by the exoticism of Grack's colorful queerness to notice whether he had a heart or mind and, as the lady says while showing her slides, too fascinated by this native of the carnival to be susceptible to feelings of pity or fear. Grack dies an ironically tragic death; but after living so long with the picturesque, I was conscious only of the mere fact, the artifice of the irony.

Our literature, more than that of

England, is full of men and women who are "characters" but have very little character. In this respect Gold resembles writers like Steinbeck and Saroyan, though I think that he is potentially better than either, and Sherwood Anderson, whose obsession with the grotesque comes uncomfortably close to being a kind of psychic curio-collecting.

In the English novel, as in English life, the "original" tends to be seen differently. The queerness of the English "original" is part of the expected, the probably improbable. His queerness is not likely to be used to shock, to give a sense of the fearfulness of life. The queerness of the "original" has been the stock in trade of English comedy, but there seems always to have been the recognition that queerness cannot be a primary concern of the serious writer. Especially in our time, English fiction has been peopled with fairly ordinary and normal (some would say tepid) characters — on the outside, anyhow, the assumption being that the significant aberrations lie beneath the surface. American fiction presents a freakish face. But beneath the surface it has often seemed shallow, trivial, a lot of sound and *etcetera*, a gallery of picturesque effects, its excitement the result of over-stimulation.

AT one extreme, then, there is the exotic and picturesque which, for all its charm, cannot provide a meaningful reality relevant to the daily lives of those of us who read novels to discover truths about ourselves we hadn't known before. At the other, there are all the plain gray Janes and Burr Fullers of fiction offering only banality and yearning, the very qualities that many of us are likely to be trying to get away from in reading novels. Less extremely, these are the antinomies of Herbert Gold's fiction and incipiently, the schizophrenia of the American novel. It is either over-stimulating and frustrating or humdrum and boring; too tied down to earnest documentation of trivia, magnified so that the open pores become craters, or trying to seduce us with fantasies of what is queer, wild and senseless on the fringes of American life.

Only the novel of ideas can bring these antinomies into synthesis, can avoid sensationalism and yet generate excitement, can allow temperate minds and aspirations to rub against one another so that there is heat enough. And light too. When ideas are made to serve the imagination by being dramatized and assimilated into a fictional world, the characters who inhabit that

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world are all the more free to delight us with whatever originality and unpredictability the wit of the novelist can contrive for them. Queerness rooted in an active life of the mind will seem natural, a normal manifestation of a more deep-rooted individuality. Such characters will not be fictitious curiosities; they will not seem cute, because thought and belief, no less than feeling, will have given authenticity to strangeness. The example of Jane Austen, on the other hand, tells us all we need to know about the power of ideas to galvanize lives of stifled yawns into genuine adventures of the mind and heart.

PERHAPS this is to ask Americans to write English novels. If that is an unreasonable aim, what we are faced with now in the bifurcated American novel seems even less promising. I mean that insistent conception of Americanness which continues to influence the writing of all sorts of novels except the very important kind that can engage the mind of the man who turns to the novel for that part of his education

which cannot be got through any other means.

Both as novelist and critic, Herbert Gold is more than a well-wishing friend of the novel. If style is the man, he is a *writer* among the designers, fabricators and decorators who contrive consumer-products for "distracted readers." (The phrase is Saul Bellow's.) The vitality of *The Man Who Was Not With It* suggested what is usually called "a born writer," a man in search of a theme expansive enough to justify and to contain his talent. But *The Optimist* might have been written by a man who, determined to domesticate a talent too free-wheeling and wanton, has tied both hands behind his back. He need not have disciplined himself so severely. The middle-class world of Burr Fuller is an unsatisfactory alternative to the carnival underground or the seedy hotel life of *The Prospect Before Us*. Knowing, as Herbert Gold surely does, that nowadays to write a novel that can survive five years is to achieve what might as well be called greatness, why has he tried to run the race in a sack?

influenced him deeply, was an expression of actual experience, while for Americans it merely adds a sobering dimension to a world of confusing possibilities. Muir's poems—like Kafka's stories—are not difficult, but very often their heavy oppression of tone half-paralyzes the reader as if he were enmeshed in a slow-motion nightmare.

At the dead centre of the boundless plain
Does our way end? Our horses pace
and pace. . . .
Time has such curious stretches, we
are told,
And generation after generation
May travel them, sad stationary
journey
Of what device, what meaning?
("Variations on a Time Theme")

Or:

There is a road that turning always
Cuts off the country of Again.
Archers stand there on every side
And as it runs time's deer is slain,
And lies where it has lain.
("The Road")

The baffling question in such poems as these is, what lies behind the agony of men lost within "the stationary journey" of existence? In any one lifetime, generation, historical cycle we can see only so far: a succession of individual deaths, exhaustions of inspiration, recurrent defeats of the humane ideal. Eternity seems almost a principle of erosion of hope and meaning within time. There are heroic journeys and quests in Muir's poetry, and he wants them to come out right and experiments with a kind of aestheticism in which, through pure imagination, man returns to a state of innocence like Adam's or like the poet's own remembered childhood. Also, in certain poems, he experiments with a suspension of skepticism and of reason generally—an as-if projection of pure faith. Characteristically, though, the language and tone belie the "happy" projection. Muir has a way of providing a vision of beauty and joyous acceptance but surrounding it with notes of sorrow and horror that break down its integrity. Thus, in "Oedipus," he shows the Sophoclean hero accepting his lot as necessary and good, but in words so shot through with tragic knowledge that the acceptance becomes a defeated acquiescence in a principle of evil the gods themselves cannot escape. "All," says Oedipus,

must bear a portion of the wrong
That is driven deep into our fathom-
less hearts

Edwin Muir: 1887-1959

M. L. Rosenthal

BRITISH MORALE is even lower than ours, to judge by the poets. The woods of our Arcady are still crowded with revolutionists and comedians, but their mood is what Philip Larkin calls "an adhesive sense of betrayal." Their past, its very landscape and architecture, is being stolen away. The poems are named "Slough," "Dejection," "Despair." History, progress, are "jam-traps."

The recent death of Edwin Muir leads one to brood over his work* and thus to see this dwindling of morale in larger perspective. Muir, born in 1887, embodied in his career much of the development, and motivation of advanced thought in his time. He belonged to a Scottish farming family that was uprooted and brutally proletarianized. The destructiveness of this ordeal, described in his autobiography, led him to socialism. Later, he tried to heal the wounds of early traumatic experience through psychoanalysis. He became absorbed, too, in Continental romantic, existential and mystical thought. Increasingly, he came to feel that our century has all but beaten the humanity out of modern man:

*See *Collected Poems 1921-1951* (Grove Press; \$1.45).

It was not time that brought these
things upon us,
But these two wars that trampled
on us twice,
Advancing and withdrawing, like a
herd
Of clumsy-footed beasts on a stupid
errand
Unknown to them or us. . . .
("The Good Town")

We Americans too have been through these wars, but not in this European sense. We do not believe that we and whatever we build must again and again be literally trampled down. We still think that any morning we can rearrange the rules and start everything all over again in a completely new way; we even think that any one of us, if he really puts his mind to it and does the proper exercises, can remake the world in the divine image. If we feel guilty, it is because we cannot find the time to bring about this necessary reform. But when a European like Muir feels guilty, it is because he seems to himself part of an inexorable fatality for which he is irrationally responsible as Agamemnon and Oedipus were responsible for the deeds of their ancestors. For Muir the vision of Kafka, which

Past sight or thought; that bearing
it we may ease

The immortal burden of the gods. . .

Muir's poetry is tortured with the sense of history and personal life as an inescapable, pitifully exhausting compulsion to follow a pointless maze of roads that "run and run and never reach an end." In one poem the victorious Greeks, returning from Troy to their longed-for homes and families, find only disappointment and triviality; if they could they would turn back to that dread wall against which they battered their prime years—the mystery of destiny is rendered unheroic by its banality, and ironic by men's utter ignorance of where they really are and what really awaits them. But neither an Oedipus nor an Odysseus has any choice; heroic or not, man is whipped along whatever road he travels. He cannot rest, cannot retrace his way to the irrevocable through the "sweet and terrible labyrinth of longing," cannot take any sure bearings for the future.

The thing that makes this poetry so difficult to contemplate for very long at a time is its infinite sadness, and the repressed hysteria that underlies it. The horror of "Then" and "The Combat," poems in which the essential discovery of life's cruelty is at once abstracted and condensed into the most elementary dramatic imagery, cuts at us like a sword-slash at the face. The shock of "Troy" or "The Interrogation" or "The Good Town" is rooted in contemporary political experience—the experience of heartless torture and of human beings become scavengers among the ruins of civilization, of the systematic displacement of peoples, of a restless evil eating away at all we consider meaningful. "The Usurpers" stares into the blank face of a world "liberated" from every old concern and value and finds no answer but "black in its blackness"—

There is no answer, We do here what
we will

And there is no answer. . .

But the most heartbreaking poems are the ones that picture or seek to evoke the primal innocence of man—"Horses," "The Animals," "The Myth" and others. In Muir we have a great spokesman for the foiled humanistic ideal of European man, and for the era in which that ideal began to lower its flag in utter discouragement. The paltry lugubriousness of so much contemporary British writing is transcended by the vastness of what Muir implies—that once again the stars have "thrown down their spears" and "watered heaven with their tears."

April 25, 1959

MUSIC

Lester Trimble

THREE young men held the stage at a New York Philharmonic concert recently, when Leonard Bernstein presided on the podium (and at the harpsichord, for a Handel Concerto Grosso), Glenn Gould played the Mozart C Minor Piano Concerto, K. 491, and Kenneth Gaburo, a thirty-two-year-old American composer, was represented by the world premiere of his *Elegy* for orchestra. With the exception of the last-named work, which I did not enjoy, it was an admirable concert. In terms of instrumental bulk, the evening was shaped something like a cornucopia. The Handel Concerto Grosso, Opus 6, No. 12, called for a very small group of players, with the conductor leading from the keyboard. For the Mozart Concerto, a larger, Classical ensemble was used. Gaburo's *Elegy* was played with normal, present-day instrumentation, and Strauss's *Till Eulenspiegel* painted its jolly scene with an augmented orchestra typical of the composer and his esthetic.

These external matters would seem beside the point if it were not that a large part of the evening's pleasure came from Bernstein's sensitive contrasting of instrumental styles. Not all of it, however. The three repertory works, apart from any other consideration, are masterpieces in their respective genres, and in each of them the performance approached perfection. The little group of Philharmonic musicians who played the Handel Concerto gave it an almost Italianate smoothness and warmth, so that its exterior gleamed like pearl, while the antiphonal writing on the interior was woven like fine lace. In *Till Eulenspiegel*, Bernstein proved again that he can whip an extravaganza of orchestral sound without becoming gross or losing his sense of thematic cogency. There was one breathless moment, in a syncopated passage, when I feared that the Broadway bounce was going to take over, but Strauss and Vienna won out.

In the Mozart Concerto, Gould and Bernstein achieved the kind of sensitive musical accord which is too infrequent between soloist and conductor. The C Minor Concerto is a gentle, but cleanly etched, work. Nothing could be more ideal for it than an interpretation in which the pianist makes the most of every slender, expressive phrase, letting it hang in the air for its rightful moment, and then deferring to the orchestra. Such playing, which approaches

chamber music in its refinement and flexibility, depends upon the absolute rapport and reciprocity which Bernstein furnished on this occasion. And, as usually happens under such circumstances, every part of the interpreting mechanism gained in excellence. Gould's tone, which can grow dry, became more and more suffused with discreet opulence. His lyrical passages sang from the inside; the fast ones skimmed the air like wild canaries — and stayed firmly on the beat. In short, he gave a performance to remember.

WITH a young composer, one is generally inclined to be tolerant, looking for those qualities which seem to indicate hopeful things to come. But Kenneth Gaburo's *Elegy* seemed singularly lacking in virtues. It achieved only a certain empty portentousness in spots, and had an orchestral manner which seemed to point to itself and say "See — I am modern." Upon close listening, the or-

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chestral manner did not seem so much modern as pretentious; it was awkward almost to the point of amateurism. The opening statement of thematic material, by trombones, was unpleasant and unconvincing both in sonority and in content, and the permutations of this material which comprised the body of the work turned out to be, in almost every case, outright cliché hiding behind a facade of instrumentation. The sentiments were shallow, and we have heard them all a thousand times.

I would not speak so bluntly about this piece if it did not embody such dangerously false artistic attitudes—dangerous to the composer's future work, that is, and to the perspective of listeners who cannot, with certainty, tell the difference between a genuine and a non-genuine product. Awkwardness and posturing are not "modern," "craggy," "angular," or expressive. With this *Elegy* it was not just a question of recognizing that the emperor had no clothes; the emperor wasn't there at all.

ART

Maurice Grosser

FORTY oils of Louis Eilshemius are on view until the end of the month at The Artists' Gallery. Eilshemius, or as he preferred to call himself, "Dr. Louis M. Eilshemius, M.A., etc.," followed with painful exactitude the life of the great and misunderstood artist of romantic literature. Born in New Jersey in 1864 of prosperous parents, he had every advantage of education and travel—in Germany, this country, Paris, Africa and the South Seas. He painted diligently and in complete obscurity until 1917 when, at the age of fifty-three, he was suddenly "discovered." The price asked for his picture in that year's Independent show caught Marcel Duchamp's eye. The magnificent nerve of a completely unknown painter demanding \$6,000 for a not very good picture (the *Rose-Marie* of the present show) at a time when the best Cézanne could be had for \$600 struck Duchamp's acute sense of the absurd. He sought the painter out and found a quiet little man who soberly and reasonably explained that he, Eilshemius, was the foremost genius of the age—a painter greater than Rembrandt, a musician greater than Beethoven, a writer who combined the gifts of Shakespeare with those of Byron. He had painted thousands of pictures (there are more than 3,500 oils extant and innumerable draw-

ings and water colors). he had written some 200 musical compositions and 300 volumes of poems and stories, and all this at top speed: at the rate of forty-five minutes for a painting, three hours for a short story and sonnets on the average of three minutes each. He carried in his pocket a pamphlet which recounted his accomplishments:

Educator, ex-actor, amateur all-around doctor, mesmerist-prophet and mystic, reader of hands and faces, linguist of five languages, graphologist, dramatist (seven works), short story writer and novelettes (twenty-six works), humorist galore, ex-mimic (animal voices and humans), ex-all-around athlete sportsman (to 1889), universal supreme critic, ex-Don Giovanni [perhaps in reference to a method he had devised for attracting women which involved a fixed stare and a pendulum-like motion of the head], designer of jewelry, etc.; spiritist, spirit-painter supreme. . . .

And so on for three more paragraphs.

Duchamp, himself a prime mover in the Dada movement, a very Leonardo of the logic and mechanics of nonsense, must have found such immoderate self-esteem extremely gratifying. And just as the satirist Alfred Jarry, author of *Ubu Roi*, had been amused by Le Douanier Rousseau's zany character, and instigated his launching, so Duchamp instigated the launching of the much more extravagant Eilshemius. At any rate, in 1920, the Société Anonyme, founded by Duchamp and Katherine Drier, staged Eilshemius' first one-man show. This had no success whatever, and in 1921 Eilshemius, discouraged, gave up painting for good. Presently, however, the pictures, which had all been acquired by dealers for little or nothing, began to sell. None of this profited the painter who, having come to the end of his resources, was living in debt and poverty. By 1939, the contrast between the painter's extreme

indigence and the great sums his pictures were bringing the dealers had become so scandalous that Juliana Force of the Whitney Museum organized a committee to come to his aid. He died two years later at the age of seventy-seven, poor, embittered, famous and probably mad. As an edifying and fitting end to the story, his funeral was attended by the most famous figures in American art circles.

SEEN thirty years later, the pictures are less edifying. In fact they are disappointing—so uneven and hasty that it is almost cruel to judge them by ordinary professional standards. Their general style is that of the wall decorations in Italian-American restaurants. The color is pallid and sometimes charming. Some of the landscapes, the less romantic ones, have considerable air and distance. The romanticism of the subject matter is for the most part childish and the figure compositions are more than inept. The nudes and figures are of the standard type to be found in the figure drawing of those elderly ladies and gentlemen who attend life-class as a hobby and who will never improve—with tiny hands and feet, ball-like breasts, and heads with hair and features carefully assigned. Some few of the pictures, nevertheless, possess a naive charm which goes far to explain his popularity.

Eilshemius, however, was not a naive painter: he was an ignorant one, a painter who had attended all the schools and yet had never succeeded in learning the basic lesson of how to see. Learning takes a certain humility, all too difficult for one accustomed to call himself "the Supreme Parnassian and Grand Transcendent Eagle of Arts." It has been suggested that Eilshemius' complex egotism made difficult his recognition as a painter. That is not likely. Very little of the painting is that good. Except for the extravagances of his megalomania, he would probably not have been discovered at all.

The Routine

Each day I open the cupboard
& the green shoots of my last onion
have in the dark grown higher

A perverse & fairly final pleasure
that I love to watch him stretching himself
secretly, green sprouting shamelessly in
this winter, making a park in my kitchen, making
spring for a moment in my kitchen

that, instead of eating him

I have watched him grow

PAUL BLACKBURN

FILMS

Robert Hatch

THE FILM version of *Compulsion*, Meyer Levin's story of the Loeb-Leopold crime, is projected in New York on a curved screen too large for anything less monumental than Hannibal's passage across the Alps. This expansiveness is especially unfortunate because *Compulsion* is a photographer's picture. Dean Stockwell and Bradford Dillman, as the two killers, and Orson Welles as Clarence Darrow, act for the most part with their faces—the picture is almost an animated portrait gallery. But faces projected on this scale become more impressive topographically than emotionally, and the camera work imposes itself as a feat upon the narrative.

Gigantism aside, the picture is a responsible and compelling description of how "it might have happened." Stockwell and Dillman convey a kind of spastic wickedness, a glassy detachment from reality as from decency, which is at least symbolically deadly. The theory for their behavior—that they suffered the kind of emotional neglect that is visited by our society only upon the very rich and the very poor—is probably both too simple and as close as we shall ever come. The Loeb-Leopold case was removed to folklore even before the trial was completed—almost from the start it has been impossible to treat the two young men as anything but symbols.

Certainly that is how Darrow treated them, and thus saved their lives. Approximately half way through the picture Welles appears and takes over from Stockwell and Dillman. Dramatically that is awkward, it breaks the picture in two, but I don't see how it could have been avoided. Darrow did take over and the two young men, who had roused in the country an almost zoological interest, were pushed into the background by his great presence. The role suits Welles. It is all acting, patently and self-consciously acting, with every nuance blown up to a bludgeon. It could be said that that is always Welles's way with a role, but here it can as well be taken as Darrow's way with a case. The words are beautiful. They would drive a semanticist out of his mind, because Darrow was spinning a web of humane forbearance in which all values became liquid. Nevertheless they are beautiful: Darrow was fighting the ritual of capital punishment with the only weapon the law permitted him—unashamed eloquence. Welles gives the

impression of a man wearing tragic motley in a cause essential to his faith in humanity. It is admirable work.

JOHN BRAINE'S *Room at the Top* is an underpinning document of the British Young Angries, whose dissatisfaction is said to be compounded of Welfare State comforts, a broadening of educational opportunities and a blurring of class distinctions. I did not read the novel, but in the picture made from it I can detect no new social or psychological factors, nor any thesis on which one might found a movement. It is a good story, and has been for a long time.

It is true that Americanization is thought to be part of the Angry plight and that Joe Lampton (Laurence Harvey), with his crew-cut hair, clean-cut jaw and quite unsuitable accent, is a rather American-seeming hero. But then Becky Sharp was a rather American-seeming heroine and Dick Whittington was at least cousin to Benjamin Franklin. British class barriers have never been more than statistically impregnable; single individuals with higher than average energy, have always been able to jump to a higher orbit.

What troubles me about the picture is that Jim seems singularly unpromising as a class jumper. I understand from the reviews that in the novel he is a fearfully ruthless young man; as shown in the picture he is about as ruthless as gooseberry flan. He has a specious callowness that could appeal to lonely older women—and does so appeal to one played with moist physical weight by Simone Signoret—but the real trouble with his ambition is not that it is vaunting but that it is inept. Joe's ruses are transparent and his execution of them is laughable. I don't believe that a tough old industrialist would hand over his daughter and a share of the plant to so sheepish a seducer. It's true that illegitimacy is a terrible weapon to hold over a family whose line goes back pretty directly to the pithead (the older families do not panic so quickly; they have more accommodating traditions and better lawyers), but in this case the baby seemed very much a bastard *ex machina*.

The film repeatedly suggests that there is something important about Joe Lampton, but what it is never comes clear. He looks throughout to be a very average clerk whose vicious little day-dreams frighten him almost to death by

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persistently coming true. This is made
possible by a general poverty of resolu-
tion or even common sense in the group
upon which he fastens himself. Some
quite good acting has gone into this
picture, but I get the impression that,
with respect to the novel, something in
the way of spinal structure has been
left out.

WHEN you put a wig on Yul Brynner
he looks like Richard Widmark. I don't
know how generally interesting this in-
formation may be, but it is surely more
interesting than the information that
Twentieth Century-Fox has been able
to find a workable script in Faulkner's
The Sound and the Fury. Inside the
poetic and speculative garments of every
Faulkner novel there lurks a red-eyed
melodrama. Hollywood has only to strip
it bare and, presto, a popular thriller.

The trick is so easy that this time
it hasn't been very well done. The key
to what is wrong, perhaps, is Benjy —
who appears as the cleanest, neatest,
in every way most appetizing half-wit
who ever paced the weathered verandah
of a decaying mansion. Jack Warden,
in the role, looks for all the world like
an alert actor walking around with his
jaw loose and his eyes unfocused. And
the rest of the cast—Joanne Woodward,
Margaret Leighton, Francoise Rosay,
John Beal, etc.—give very much the
impression of having stopped over be-
tween trains to visit their old friend,
Ethel Waters, who is whimsically pre-
tending to be an ignorant old cook.
Yoknapatawpha runs off this cast like
water off a duck.

It's too bad, because the spectacle of
Yul Brynner taming Joanne Woodward,
though scarcely an adequate translation
of the novel, could have made an ade-
quate movie. And right in the fashion
of Hollywood's current discovery that
the South photographs hot, sexy and
violent in Technicolor.

(Continued from inside back cover)

- 25 Projects. (7)
- 26 Should traveling clothes be so styl-
ish? (6)
- 27 Climbs on top of sheds, perhaps?
- 30 Reconcile to a severance. (4)
- 31 Boom box, perhaps. (4)

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noble; 10 Dubiety; 11 Grilled; 12 Eye-
lash; 15 Honors; 17 Stress; 18 Amigo;
19 Nicely; 22 Usages; 27 Radiate; 28
Emulous; 30 Blinded; 31 Oversee; 32
Ether; 33 Rotterdam. **DOWN:** 1 and 13
Goings on; 3 Cobbler; 4 Creeds; 5 Sod-
den; 6 Subject; 7 Average; 8 Psycho-
sis; 14 Ovine; 15 and 2 Honorable
mention; 16 Say; 17 and 25 across
Soured; 20 Caddish; 21 Leander; 23
Squeeze; 24 Glossed; 25 Reader; 26
Decoit; 29 Steam.

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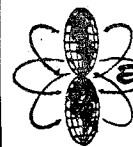
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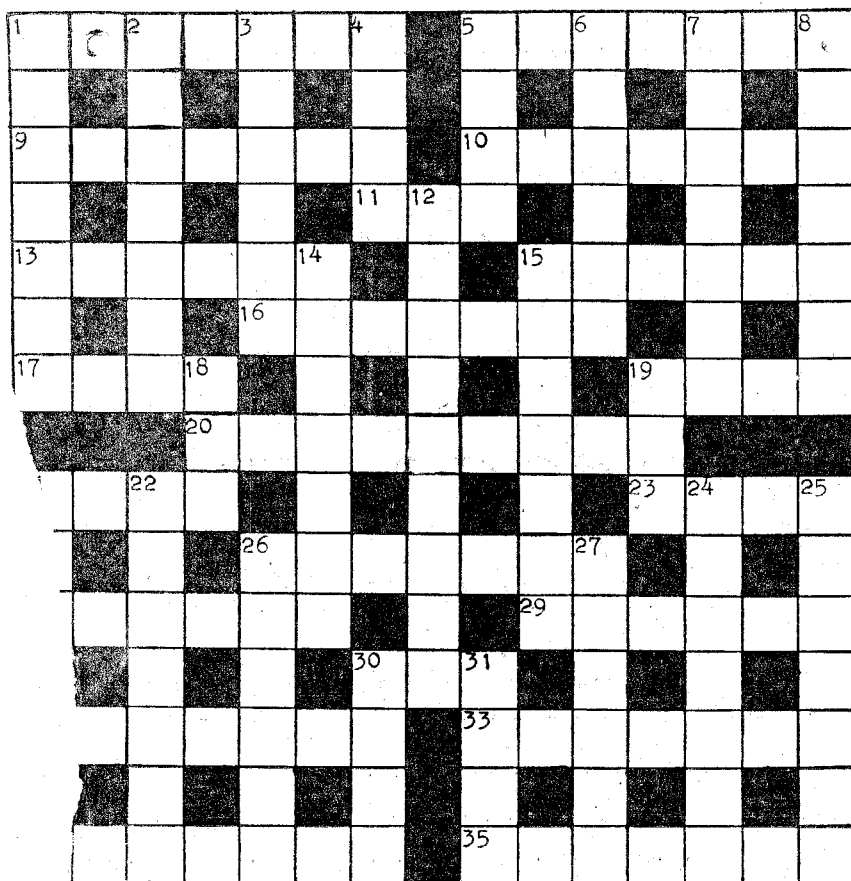
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Crossword Puzzle No. 817

By FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS:

- 5 The habits here may be unusual, with hopefully unrecognizable features. (7,7)
- 9 Realizing the profits of insect protection? (7)
- 10 Would the idea of turning the sun over make one so? (7)
- 11 Caleb was an early one. (3)
- 13 Does one draw the line at such decision? (6)
- 15 Flounder in a likely spot, by the sound of it. (6)
- 16 Are not commonly found in secret surroundings, as George and Patrick are! (7)
- 17, 19 across, and 21 across Does the job make the light pack seem older, if one has to take a licking sometimes? (7,5)
- 20 Certainly not at the bottom of your heart! (A complete one has at least one pipe for each digital.) (5,4)
- 23 The towers of 21 down used to have big ones. (4)
- 26 Did the author of "Rolling Down to Rio" claim he'd never seen one of these cars? (7)
- 28 The proper method to produce 4 down by taking advantage of an unexpected seizure. (6)
- 29 Stamp out liquor? (6)
- 30 Used to be the return of the rip, perhaps. (3)

- 32 How to make a score of things, but not necessarily originally. (7)
- 33 Would an early settler find most of the medicine ghastly? (7)
- 34 This bird might be calmer. (7)
- 35 Concerning several aspects of lives?

DOWN:

- 1 Able to stumble, and not to split asunder—it's an old 29 trick! (7)
- 2 Lands a number with a sort of tsetse? (7)
- 3 Concords. (6)
- 4 Urges chaps, good or bad. (4)
- 5 Test support, and then mount! (4)
- 6 It's not very often you'd find a god depend on it!
- 7 Is this board associated with the press? (7)
- 8 Mrs. Blimp and Miss O'Grady, subcutaneously? (7)
- 12 Would "Sustyla" be a rebus of Florida, for example? (9)
- 14 Make room for this passage! (7)
- 15 Such horses are not responsible for a sterling appearance. (7)
- 18 Head spinner? (3)
- 19 One of the things the navy of Tharshish brought with ivory and peacocks. (3)
- 21 A yarn spun on the way. (What might make it with 18?) (7)
- 22 Are the magisterial duties not written down after a time? (7)
- 24 Is 19 across so related to sage? (7)
- (Continued on page 396)

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